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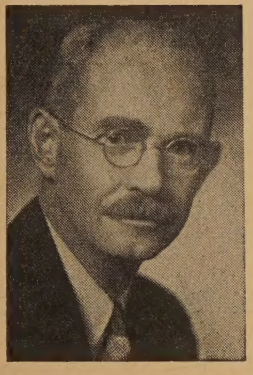
A Journal of Contemporary Preaching



Morton S. Enslin:

The Bible— Asset or Liability

W. Sherman Skinner • It Gets Under Your Skin

Paul S. Kershner • One Year—No Christmas

William O. Byrd • A Time for Greatness

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MARTIN E. MARTY • A TIME OF LONGING

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IDENTITY

This is man's great glory,
That he grew
From the dark limbo of his misty past,
And that he knew
A dream was his to work at, to fulfill,
Through all the ages he must climb uphill.

And this is man's great wonder,
Not his shame,
That, failing often, slipping, sliding back,
He keeps that dream
So long untarnished through the mud and scum,
Still scarce aware the man he may become!

Katherine L. Ramsdell

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

ME XXVIII DECEMBER 1957 No. 12

THIS page were to go back to Dr. Morrison's miliar, much appreciated format, there would o hesitation in choosing the Event of the th in which this Memo is written. Writing in ber for November distribution of the December issue, I am as bemused now by the Russian satellite as you can certainly remember yourself having been in Oc-

Memo:

r. Surely it will take more than a month or to get over the shock and the suggestion in the it.

'e turned a new page, we began a new chapter. read the same old story. The new page was ied when some men proved to all men that the h itself cannot contain them, that we are on the to wandering in the universe, that we can tres- now on starry preserves. The old story has to with the splendor and the shame, the grandeur the misery of the man who begins this new pter.

Never has his magnificence shown more brightly n now, reflected from the bright side of the lies he has set in the heavens, radioed to all in galaxy who may hear. Man is more than the ger of great song we have long known him to —more than the teller of marvelous tales, more n the painter of pictured beauty, than the lder of cities, than the conjurer of atmospheres. is a maker of moons and there can be no end to honor due him for the intricacies his brilliance comprehended, for the breath-taking flash of imagination, for the implacable might with ich he has pressed incredible powers into bound. man's splendor we have in our sky a mighty new of. We shall yet wander among the worlds.

But is not this new seal of our grandeur also a n of our shame? Where are the glad songs that eryone ought to be able to single before such a racle wrought so wondrously by that miracle, n? Where is the single, world-wide exhileration d exhaltation there ought to be for this elevation our ceiling, this vast sweeping back of our hori- ns? Has a single man's glorying in the achieve- ent been untouched by dread? Does it not say mething about us that at our greatest we must ar that greatness most greatly?

Late in October Chicago celebrated itself with hicago Dynamic" festivities. Carl Sandburg was e speaker at the Chicago Dynamic Climax Ban- uet(!). Midway of his cadenced, half-crooned ad- ess came a little hymn to man:

> Man, the stumbler and finder, goes on,
> man the dreamer of deep dreams,
> man the shaper and maker,
> man the answerer.

If only we could stop there. But of course, we can't: that is just half the story. Man as he is asks as many questions as he answers—creates as many problems as he solves. And the more triumphant the last answer, the more terrible the next question is liable to be.

Bacteria are isolated and new health and happiness insured; somewhere, tanks full of death threaten the madness of bacteriological warfare. We learn to ride the air and so create new community; but what destruction might also be air-borne? Sight and sound leap across continents and seas, so truth can be seen and heard as never before; and lies go around the world as well.

Even when the poet wants to put the best possible face on the matter, honesty slowly leads his lines to at least a hint of the questions asked by "man the answerer":

> The hammers of man from stone to steel,
> the fire of man from pine flare to blowtorch,
> the lights of man from burnt wood to flash bulb,
> clew readings of man from hill bonfire to
> radar shadings,
> the fights of man from club and sling to the
> pink mushroom of Hiroshima, . . .

The same sixty years in which the shaper and maker built a city to its Dynamic Climax, "we have seen large-scale slaughters of human beings, diabolical shames and outrages, almost inconceivable violations of human dignity of a kind and on a scale never before known to the Family of Man around the earth."

The way we see things, standing under the new satellite, has nothing to do with our theological school or our turn of mind. What branch of orthodoxy dares him the promise in man's accomplishment? Where is the liberal who blinks the peril? Neither optimism nor pessimism has anything to do with assessment of the truth. Things are as they are. Cheerful or chary, we cannot change the truth.

So we proceed into a day that is "pregnant again with the old twins, Hope and Fear" (John Donne). The discovery is marvelous. But what might be the destruction: that thought chastens hasty vaunting and turns self-sufficiency to prayer.

Almighty God, who hast lent might to his creature, save us now from ourselves that thou mayest safely prosper our creations.

T. A. G.

It Gets Under Your Skin

By W. Sherman Skinner

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12.

IT IS a unique phenomenon, the strange Word which speaks in this book—a Word which is living, active, sharp, cutting down into life with such subtle distinctions as between body and spirit, penetrating as if into the very marrow of your bones, unmasking the desires of your heart until you see them in their naked truth. This is the hallmark of the book's divine origin, the seal of its authenticity: it gets under your skin.

There is a fairly respectable array of evidence which some want to parade to convince others of divine inspiration and revelation in the Bible. But you can never "prove" conclusively, on the merely rational plane, that the Word of God is there, any more than you can by pure logic that God even exists, to anyone who does not want to believe it. Life consists of so much more than intellect that you stultify yourself if you try to stop at that level. As Pascal said, "The heart has reasons which the reason knows not of."

The real reason for knowing that God speaks through this book, according to the Westminster Confession of Faith, which is the doctrinal standard of our Church, the "full persuasion and assurance . . . is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts." In other terms, the final conviction comes because, when in the right spirit we hear the Word of this book, it speaks to us in such a way that we know here is something unique, something from beyond, something authoritative and divine.

We need to pause at this point long enough to say this does not mean that anything which under your skin is *ipso facto* divine nor even essarily good. There are some very cheap and s very false things which seem to reach into hearts of some of us. As far as things out Scripture are concerned, there are other che and tests which also need to be applied. But to on Universal Bible Sunday, we are talking ab this book.

Think for a few moments of some of the w the Bible touches the deepest things inside us so gets hold of us that we have to pause and lis because, somehow, we know it is God speakin

The Ultimate Question

It gets under your skin, first of all, with ultimate question which everybody sometimes a and with the suggestion of an answer. It is y question, the question about God; and the wor Scripture comes breaking in upon you with answer you wanted to hear. You yourself know age-old experience of a longing and a seeking a something final and sure, and the haunting se which may never take clear form with you, b which grips the people who move through th pages—the intuition of a last reality, a final c tainty: God reigns! The first part of that expe ence, the longing, the leaning forward to p through the mists that cover the earth to see there is any real light beyond, this is everyon experience sometime. And today there are a lot voices answering No! to your question. But s you look.

> So with the wan waste grasses on my spear
> I ride forever seeking after God.
> My hair grows whiter than my thistle plume
> And all my limbs are loose, but in my eyes
> The star of an unconquerable praise,
> For in my soul one hope forever sings,
> That at the next white corner of a road
> My eyes may look on Him.*

The people who walk across the pages of the Bi have asked your question, but also their ears a open to a voice which you want to hear but whi never comes quite clear to you. And it gets und your skin.

The question struggles up to the surface throu Abram's impulse to leave his homeland and se another. God seems to be driving him out. Y

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* From a poem by G. K. Chesterton.

felt it sometime in your life: an urge to go on some mission, to undertake some task, to k some great need; a compulsion so strong it seemed to come from outside yourself, to be thing more than yourself, to have some unable sanction. Was this God? Was He leading Is there any God? With Abram it comes . He knows beyond any shadow of doubt that has spoken to him. And there is something it the account that rings true to you. There is ething here you have half felt, half want to It is tantalizing. It gets under your skin.

Ourselves in Others

r perhaps the battle you have known, the one nuch like your experience that it seems to be rs under another name, is the one through h Job fought his way. There seemed to be no fortune or affliction befalling men which had overtaken Job: his fortune and estate were ed out; his children were all killed; he was ken with a horrible and painful infection; e was nothing left for him. Yet through it all insisted on a troubled but repeated gamble of h that God was reigning and somehow doing all ngs well. His wife said, "Renounce God and "; his friends argued against him; lurking bts came up in his own mind so that in the lst of clinging to his faith he would cry, "Oh, t I knew where I might find him." That is the d of struggle of which more than one life is de; and you have probably known some of it: want to believe, but these things you cannot derstand if God reigns, and you have to send up trembling question again. Then in the end you r Job saying: "I had heard of Thee by the uring of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee." d you know somehow that this is real.

Or you understand Hannah, unable to have a ld and wanting one so much and praying for e so hard that the priest thought there was nething wrong with her. Or you see yourself in iah who, in the hour when the very idol of his was taken by death, felt that for the first time had seen God. On one hand the burning ques-n; on the other the living answer. In the midst Athens you find the philosophical questions lking proudly around an altar "To An Unown God"; and then a little man coming to eak to them with authority because he has heard d's voice; and some of them believe him and hers laugh. And you know that this is real, this universal, this is your own experience. The leap faith and the laugh of scorn are so close; it is a ece of the very core of life; and you don't know nether to believe or laugh. But, yes! the laughter des. This is you in all these people, sending up ur troubled question from an uncertain heart. nd the answering assurance that has sounded ain and again and again within them storms ur heart, and finally God breaks in upon you, d you know. It has happened somehow inside u. God has spoken.

The Word in this book gets under your skin also cause there is some point at which every one of us stands judged by Scripture. There is a finger pointed at us. You cannot get away from it. It is like one of those pictures of a man pointing, and no matter where you move nor from what angle you look, he is still pointing at you. It is like King David when Nathan told him about a man who had mistreated his neighbor; and David was indignant and said the man should die for this; and then Nathan said, "Thou art the man." Scripture does that at some point to everyone who is not completely calloused. It says, "Thou art the man," and the finger points; and you can't get away from it; and it gets under your skin.

You see men there who have answered a call to service, calls which came to them as calls come to you, when you reply that you are totally unfitted and unequipped and you cannot possibly do it. That was the answer of Gideon, and of Isaiah, and of Moses, and of Jeremiah. But they went; and the wisdom and understanding and life of mankind have been richer for their service ever since. Then you see one like Saul who had a tremendous opportunity and bungled it until he had to say, "I have played the fool"; and, as you look, in the last, pathetic days of his folly, his trembling finger seems to turn and point—at you? Does it get under your skin?

Cutting Words

There are words of Jesus—sometimes the gentlest and loftiest and most beautiful—which, by the shining sharpness of their truth, cut, and cut deep into your heart because they light up its darkness. He says, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth"; and your proud spirit is suddenly stripped of its conventional modesty behind which you thought you really had a right to some part of the earth; and you no longer deceive even yourself. He says, "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called sons of God"; and your presumption that you were a son of God melts away as you see how much war you have made by your words and thoughtlessness and temper at home and at work. He says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . and thy neighbor as thyself . . . "; and the finger brushes aside the rags of your decency to point at the cocky little self at the core of you which has really been seeking its own ends first.

Or, as you move about in this book, you run into Thomas, the reluctant friend of Jesus, and say, "There am I. I just can't feel the rushing, unquestioning enthusiasm of some of these other Christians. Frankly, I'm skeptical; I've got to be shown. I'm like Thomas." But just stand there another minute, and you see Thomas looking squarely at Christ and, in a surge of faith, giving his whole self to Him; and the transparent honesty of his former doubt turns the light on you to ask whether you are really like that.

You follow Peter through his impulsive loyalty and impetuous acts of faithfulness, then through his complete misunderstanding of Jesus, and his weakness and denial—and you say, "Ah, there am

(Continued on page 23)

To Love It You Must Know It;
To Know It You Must Love It

The Bible-

FIFTEEN years ago, when finishing a manuscript on which I had worked very hard for many years, seeking to put within one set of covers the material which it appeared to me a student of the New Testament and of the Christian beginnings needed to know, I found myself writing as the concluding sentence:

> To love it you must know it;
> To know it you must love it.

It seemed true to me then; it seems to me even truer now.

Precisely because this does seem so crystal clear, I have felt through the years an increasing sense of unrest and disquiet at two tendencies relating to biblical criticism which appear to me very dangerous, even vicious. The one is easily phrased and appears to me to require no particular refutation. It is the attitude expressed by the word, "Set for the defense of the Scriptures." To me that is at once a confession of fear and an unparalleled effrontery on the part of the one expressing it. I confess that I read and reread the old story of Uzzah and the Ark with ever-increasing interest and at times, I fear, an unmannerly chuckle. Through the years there have been many Uzzahs; I do not remember one whose fate has been essentially unlike that of the presumptuous Israelite at the threshing floor of Nacon. Perhaps I am oversimplifying something concerning which my eyes are holden, but during many years of investigation and work, at times in quarries where the rock has been very hard, I have never felt an impulse or seen any necessity for defense of these writings. If that experience should come, it seems to me now that it would be the most disillusioning one which I could undergo.

Disquieting Tendency

The other tendency is a bit more difficult to describe with precision and fairness, for it appears in different forms and is championed by different groups. It would be possible to characterize it flippantly—and I am afraid that in my own think I succumb not infrequently to that undisciplined allure—as "tired liberalism." For nearly two decades now we have been hearing from many different quarters complaints that biblical criticism has been too exclusively analytical and literary; that the critics have lost sight of their proper search for the will of God in this literature and consequently of its relevance for the work of the church. "Critics," it is said, "have been too exclusively concerned with a search for values, too often separate and seemingly unrelated; that what is needed is a relevant and constructive approach which will make the Bible evident as the record of the repeated and consistent proclamation of the great and saving acts of God. Too long critics have been content to point out the differences between the attitude and that, between Moses and Isaiah, Jesus and Paul. What we need is work which will present all the elements on one unbroken canvas, demonstrating that through it all one increasing purpose runs—or at least ran for many centuries prior to the end of this all-inclusive record of salvation when the 'age of fulfillment' had dawned. In short, what we need is not analysis or more of that discipline laboring under the uncertain term 'introduction'; what we need is biblical theology."

Alarming Emphasis

To me that is a sinister and alarming emphasis be it uttered by men holding chairs of Old and New Testament in many of our seminaries and universities, or by systematic theologians not unnaturally concerned with the Bible as one of their principal assets. The danger, as I see it, is heightened because of the way it is regularly expressed. So infrequently the impression is given that all the necessary critical work has been done. Quite apart from the utterly unwarranted assumption that all the necessary work has been done, the particular danger, as I see it, lies in the fact that so many who talk that way, who insist on the superlative importance of this necessary first stage which they now appear to feel is over, show such an utter disregard for (or is it abyssmal ignorance of?) precisely what they are styling the "essential foundation."

These two tendencies toward a book which has come in the eyes of many to occupy a unique po

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By Morton S. Enslin

sset or Liability

in religious thinking appear to me dangerous and varrant the question: "The Bible—Asset or ility?" On the one hand, what can be a lamp ie feet has too often proved to be a lamppost which to hang those whose views of the na- of the lamp or the quality of the oil have been rent. That, few of us will deny, is tragic and ecessary. On the other hand, using quotations the Bible as celestial cashier's endorsements eeming support of an argument or contention ears to me no less of a peril to clear thinking honest living. Though seeming very different, share the same basic assumption: that the Bible is in essence distinct and different from y other book; that it is the creation of a God rnal to his world; that it is by him in accord his own purposes given to man, or imposed n him and thus provides man with his march- orders. Man may at times think that his is the iative, but it never is. All is of one quality— elation. What man thinks that he discovers, he overs solely because God leads him to uncover at He himself has placed, hidden, concealed for sole purpose of its being discovered. This ap- rs to me the precise insistence in the famous d of Mark (which is obscured in the subsequent rrection" or smoothing up it receives in Luke): r nothing is hid *except in order* that it may be de visible; nothing was concealed *for any other pose than* it should become visible" (Mark).

Wrong-headed Assumption

It is not surprising that men who hold such a ic assumption should be distinctly dissatisfied h the results of much biblical criticism. Of rse it appears to them "too exclusively analyti- and literary"; of course to them it seems to ave lost sight of the proper search for the will God in this literature and consequently of its evance for the work of the church." To the his- ian this is an unwarrantable point of view. The sumption that this literature is "altogether other" m all other writing and must be so treated is t only wrong but wrongheaded. At best it should the conclusion which one reaches at the end of s work, should the evidence discovered force him it. To start with it as an essential element of the iven" is to him utterly repulsive. Nor does he find the assumption more compelling by the insistence: "Of course this does not seem reasonable to you. You must accept it on faith. Then having so done you will see the faith become fact."

Faith and Facts

Such comment appears to the historian as simply a sort of self-imposed hypnosis or intoxication. For him faith does not lead to facts; instead discovered facts must lead to faith. In a word, he will not allow his feeling to determine his findings; rather he insists that his findings determine his feelings. And it seems to him—at least it does to me; perhaps I should have been using the pronouns *I* and *my* instead of *he* and *his* throughout this paragraph—it seems to him (me) that many modern theologians, that is, many theologians whose physical existence is in the modern world, have gone beyond the ancient pattern.

For the author of the Gospel of Mark, God has, to be sure, hidden some truths; they are of his conception, not man's. *But* he has hidden them in the expectation that men—or some of them!—will in due season discover them, and in the discovery will then discover the One who had initially hidden them. That is, man must play at least some part in the cosmic treasure hunt. He may not be a thinker, he may not have devised them; at least he must be an active explorer. But no, today we are being told that this is arrogant and wrong. We should not seek to find God. Rather we must wait patiently until God deigns to reveal himself to us. To Mark—to me—that appears nothing but reverent-sounding nonsense. Mark realizes that it would not be difficult to find ancient utterances in the Bible which might seem to point in the same direction; he also knows that those are for the most part elatives of deliberate exaggeration and generally in the poetry of semi-intoxication. What he dislikes is their appearance—so positively expressed—in prose.

Ill-omened Scenario

I realize full well that analogies are often misleading and must be handled with care. Without desiring thus to overstress the resemblance, I am nevertheless of the opinion that a very good case might be made for the contention that this growing emphasis in theological thinking on the "altogether

other"—be it God, his uniquely given revelation in the Bible, the segment or kernel or part of history which is to be isolated from all the rest of history and given a special name and attention such as *heilsgeschichte* ("holy history")—is in large measure a reflection of the struggle against democracy, and expresses the desire for an absolute dictator whose revelations are "yours not to question why, yours but to do or die." Whether this unconscious ideal is a Stalin in the Kremlin, a Hitler in Germany, a Franco in Spain or one of the long line of self-confessed successors to Peter in the Vatican is immaterial. They are all manufactured from the same blueprint, and most of them would be infringements of the original patent, had one been applied for. Of course there is a growing contempt for reason, for man, for his insights, his hopes and his fears, his discoveries and his blind mistakes, and I detest the whole set-up, regardless of its geographical center. Nor is my hostility to it one whit lessened when it appears in theological robes with God in the title rôle of The Grand Dictator. To me it is all part of the same ill-omened scenario. At this point the quoted word of Thomas Jefferson, "I have sworn upon the altar of God hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man," appears to me altogether admirable.

Two Opposing Ways

In theory there are two ways to regard the Bible. Actually I am convinced that this statement can be sharpened: there are *only* two ways. It is possible to have many variations of each, and such have been made through the years. When reduced to their simplest terms, they are diametrically opposed to each other.

The first sees the Bible as the complete and entire revelation of God. God has revealed the whole and entire will. Everything that men are to do and believe God has revealed to them. The way men are to worship him, the notions they are to hold about him and the world, their moral conduct, their relation to their fellows—all this has been revealed and is man's for the knowing. The Bible may seem to consist of sixty-six books and to have been produced through a space of more than a thousand years by different authors. Actually this is fictitious. It is one book, written by one author—God. The so-called "authors" are that by courtesy only, for "no prophecy came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." Under the influence of the Spirit—and this "spirit" was vastly different from what is properly understood by that overworked term today—they were scarcely more than the fingers of God. It was He who thought and spoke; they were simply his amanuenses. Thus there can be no errors, no contradictions, no omissions. Everything man in any age, in any circumstance, needed to know stood therein revealed. To be sure, it was often implicit rather than explicit. It was written, so to speak, in invisible ink. Not every one was competent to unlock the treasure. This the author of II Peter makes crystal clear: " . . . knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation"; that is, "no prohphecy can be understood thro one's own powers." It was announced by through messengers, heralds, prophets, whom had especially inspired for that purpose; it can understood only by God-inspired teachers or ap tles. This view has through the years greatly pealed to many men, as it did to the author this epistle. Convinced that they are inspired him, they are sure that they are able to interp with finality and to rule out of court the views those who disagree, for the latter have not Spirit.

Criticism of Paul

Thus the prophet, be he an Elijah, an Isaiah Jesus, a Paul, is unlike the teacher who tries teach and persuade, to lead men to grapple w problems and in the light of the various fact involved achieve the best solution. The prophet a herald who announces. No argument is necessa or proper; the word is from an absolute sovere whose word is law. The function of the herald is proclaim, not to argue. Those to whom he so nounces are to accept, not because it appears them wise or good; simply because it is so sa It is not that God said it because it was go rather, it is good because God said it. It would possible to amass almost limitless evidence to w rant this statement. One example must suffice, opening word of Paul to his Galatian converts word which has probably done more than any oth in his correspondence to alienate and repel becau of its seeming arrogance and self-satisfaction: "E though we, or an angel from heaven, should prea unto you any gospel other than that which preached unto you, let him be anathema. As said before, so say I now again, If any man preac eth unto you any gospel other than that which received, let him be anathema" (Gal. 1:8-9).

Only One Course Open

From the point of view of Paul or any oth prophet there is nothing arrogant or unnatur about such a word. It is not his own opinion, h own findings, which he is announcing. God in h own wisdom saw fit to select Paul as his instrume and to fill him for his subsequent task. Why G has so decided was none of Paul's affair, althou again and again he expresses amazement that su should have been the case. But God had so decide and but one course was open. Paul, as a chos herald, must sound the King's word. Should clash with any other pronouncement, the oth must be wrong. Opposition to Paul was actual not opposition to him at all: rather it was defian toward Almighty God, and the false herald wou pay for his blasphemous effrontery. As a corr spondent wrote me recently, to chide me gently f what I had chanced to write: "We must not broader than God's law. And anything which h did not command us to teach should not be er braced by his people and incorporated into h church." If those who hold this view were consis ent, they would disregard all other books, be the

(Continued on page 26)

The Year There Was No Christmas

By Paul S. Kershner

THOSE who have read the history of the 20th century are struck by a curious circumstance. ere was a year when Christmas never came at Everyone forgot it. No one seems to know h year this strange omission occurred but it near to the end of the 20th century. Historians silent as to the exact date, as though they were for the happening, and the less said the er. They handle the subject queerly, and one scarcely make out why no Christmas was rved that year. One has to read between the s to try to reconstruct what happened.

lthough the records never say, there are nebu- hints as to why everyone forgot Christmas. If looks closely at commercial, religious, family national life that year he can find some vague s. For instance, commercially it was a time of nendous prosperity. Some 175,000,000 Amer- is were gainfully employed working a full shift hree hours each day all three days of the com- e work week. Money was no problem. Everyone plenty. Stores were doing a phenomenal busi- s. Each week saw a new peak in volume. There so much business proprietors began to be weary long for the good old days when there were vns as well as ups, when customers had to be ed a bit. Apparently every week was Christmas k as far as business volume was concerned. This ht have led to forgetting the necessity for sea- al efforts to spark business. So Christmas went bserved.

On the national scene it was a time of great ce. America had the ultimate in nuclear weap- s. Something much better than the atom, hydro- and cobalt bombs. Not more than a half dozen these were needed. One could destroy any con- ent. Our nation had quite a sizable stockpile of m. But every other nation also had the same apon. Liberia and Nicaragua felt just as secure Russia and India. No nation feared any other tion since each was armed to annihilate the ner. Any imperative to long for peace was unnec- ssary. It scarcely seemed necessary to exercise good will since obviously good will is only mandatory in a world in which there is fear. The ancient hope for peace on earth and good will to men appeared outmoded. The national authorities simply forgot the necessity for Christmas. Christmas was expendable.

Why the churches forgot about Christmas is puzzling. One should suppose this impossible as Christmas is presumed to have some definite religious implications. But apparently the 20th century was a period of celebrating special days. This situation also existed in religious organizations; there was a riotous glorification of special days calling for particular emphasis in the churches. To name but a few: there was Laymen's Sunday, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Grandmother's Day, Children's Day, Youth Sunday, Universal Bible Sunday, World Order Day, Religious Education Week, Universal Week of Prayer, Church and Economic Life Sunday, Race Relations Week, Brotherhood Week, One Great Hour of Sharing Week, National Christian College Week, Rural Life Sunday, Church Vocation Sunday, Stewardship Sunday, Nature Sunday, Labor Day Sunday, Reformation Sunday. To these, in time, were added Stay-at-Home Sunday, Safe-Flying Sunday and a host of others. There came a year when ministers, priests and rabbis were so occupied with efforts involved in celebrating these special days and lay people so intrigued in reading newspaper accounts of them that both ministers and people simply forgot about Christmas. This was understandable as the Sunday nearest December 21 had been set aside as Winter Solstice Sunday.

Everyone Was So Busy

Then, too, the average church program had become exceedingly full. No age group was neglected, not from the tiniest tot to teetering totterer. All kinds of social and recreational activities were provided To finance these beehives many plans had to be devised, many shoulders put to many wheels. Everyone was so busy, especially at fall and winter, getting things moving, that when spiritual enterprises were suggested to augment the groaning schedule, many felt they simply had to be excused because they seldom had time to spend at home watching television. Apparently, what happened the year of no Christmas was due to the

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excessive press of activities. During autumn and early winter everyone was whizzing full steam ahead, trying hard to keep pace with the calendar of events. There was a widespread feeling of ennui and general debility. People got so bone weary they forgot all about Christmas and took off for Jamaica to bask in the sun to replenish themselves.

Even though tradesmen, politicians and religionists forgot all about Christmas no one surmised children would. For long the heresy had been widely espoused that Christmas is mostly for children. This, of course, is not true, as anyone knows who grasps the meaning of the Incarnation. But that was how people felt about Christmas at the middle of the 20th century. One would suppose children would never let the world get away without celebrating Christmas—no Santa Claus, no toys! But they did.

Why? Well, it appears that in the last half of the 20th century there was a vast discussion over juvenile delinquency. Everyone became concerned, the courts, the homes, schools, social agencies and churches. All grappled with the problem. Children became the major concern of society. All life was geared to making children adjusted, happy. Parents turned over their lives to this objective. Their only concern was, "What do the children want?" The first half of the century was known as the Woman's World, the second half the Children's World. Children were catered to, their interests heeded, their wants answered. So complete was this effort that children had everything all the time. Since they always had their way and parents couldn't give them anything they didn't have, the children never asked about Christmas. And for the moment they didn't seem to miss it.

Decisive Reaction

And so came to pass the year when there was no Christmas. The enormity of this event—or lack of event—is surpassed only by the decisiveness of the reaction. The omission was not repeated. There was but one year without Christmas. Records indicate there was a Christmas especially joyful and meaningful the next year. It seemed that everyone again hungered for the warmth and lights, the gladness and truth which now we feel to be a part of the Christmas mood. Merchants again began early to decorate their stores. Clerks went humming about their added duties as though, despite their hectic jobs, Christmas shopping had a different significance. And national authorities appeared to welcome opportunities to express good will in the sincere belief that genuine peace must spring from the basic attitude of good will. Churches began, the year after forgetting Christmas, to prepare for it as if it were the clue to their existence, the beginning of the Christian year and climax of all their proclamations. And children, though they had many things, became excited at the prospect of Christmas coming. They sensed Christmas meant simple gifts of affection, generosity, regard for others and that God bends near to earth at Christmastide. With uncomplicated clarity they sensed that without these qualities it does not really make much difference how many things one possesses. Without th qualities the world will wear an ugly face and music will set the skies above to singing. So fi everywhere the longing for Christmas swelled. P ple could scarcely wait the coming of this graci and hallowed time of year when the world strangely warmed and lighted. And there were th wise enough in those days to sense that Christi has its levels, and sad it is when not all levels seen and lived upon.

Good Cheer

First, there is the level of good cheer. The w faring man, though he be foolish and flurried many duties, knows Christmas is a time of g cheer and gathers round flowing bowls to celebra The world at times is a darkened place for even most fortunate. A time of gaiety and gladness m not be despised by any, seeing that our burdens often large and the way we must go is a lonely o Therefore, many looked up with much joy at return of Christmas and thanked God for a sea of lightness and friendship and happy groups ga ered before the fire.

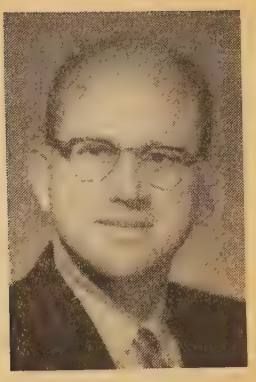
Beyond the level of good cheer is that of g will. The year there was no Christmas, this v sorely missed. For the angels' promise so eage greeted by the shepherds is a human hunger a a needful thing. Not to feel good will and ne to be brave enough to announce it is to live not all as men with whom God can be pleased. For t is the kind of speech for which our tongues tuned. We speak not the language of the high until we are deeply moved by it. No world, gri ously sundered, will be made whole again by go cheer, as comforting and welcome as that may For our malady no lesser balm than good will c heal man and nations. And no one need take a other's word for that. He has at Christmas Go word for it. We shall have to be something m than merely merry gentlemen, God rest us. V must be men of good will.

Good News

Beyond good cheer and good will is the most i portant level of Christmas—good news. To st short of God's good news, announced for the savi of men, is to halt somewhere this side of Bethleh and to hail every Christmas from afar. This is t difficulty of our time, that there be those who ta the journey toward Christmas and never tru arrive, who attend the feast and know not the h nor why it is given. The great good news for all that once One was sent to be light in our darkne hope in our despair, a guide for our pilgrima This means that we should know no man need wa alone, that in all our journeying there is Emma uel, God with us.

Small wonder there was but one year when the was no Christmas. Mankind could ill afford to spa it. So this Christmastide may each of you ha hearts and souls deeply touched and strange stirred by good cheer, good will and good new And may there be never again "a year when the was no Christmas."

ll We Echo the Sound Words of God
Repeat the Rumors of Troubled Men?



A Time for Greatness

By William O. Byrd

nd all things are of God, who hath reconciled o himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not uting their trespasses against them, and entrust- to us the message of reconciliation. So we are assadors for Christ, God making his appeal ugh us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be nciled to God. II Corinthians 5:18-20.

UT the church *must speak* in crisis—or it ceases to *be* the church!

rom the beginnings of time God has called forth ple to be called by his Name. And from the be- ning the call has come to those who would speak God to His people. The prophets and poets of Old Testament could not but speak the mes- e of God in times of crisis. An Isaiah could see he Lord high and lifted up" and respond "Here I, send me." Amos could thunder out in the ne of God to "let justice roll down like a mighty eam." Micaiah had to reply to those who de- nded soft sayings and pleasant platitudes: "As Lord liveth, even what my God saith, that will peak."

And in the upward climb of man the apostles of New Testament echoed their heritage. Peter isting in the power of his risen Lord, "We can t speak that which we have seen and heard." ul proclaiming his battle cry: "The love of Christ nstraineth me. . . . Woe to me if I preach not the spel."

Throughout history, when days became evil, men God and of the church have "redeemed the time" they spoke out for their God. Martin Luther: fere I stand, I can do no other"; John Wesley, isting that even the forgotten masses of huddled, or miners were children of God; Martin Nie- ller, breaking into song with "A Mighty Fortress our God" as Nazi troopers entered his church to force the wild rantings of one who proclaimed a naster race"; and in our own day, Bishop Paul E. Martin saying: " . . . The Christian church would not be worthy of itself if it did not speak out bravely and forcefully for the principles for which it stands . . . in this crisis, let the church be the church!"

This is a time for greatness. Never have we been called to live under such tensions as in recent days. Every institution of a society based on law is threatened by irresponsible persons and groups who would use the hurt of our people to advance their own causes. And in a world dominated by the light of a Soviet moon are we prepared to pay the price of such divisions among us, such threats to the basic principles we love? Certainly such a time calls for greatness in individuals and in the Church.

Silent Pulpit A Betrayal

So the church must speak! For a silent pulpit speaks loudest of all—in its testimony of a Christ betrayed. I know that there are those who suggest that the church can be the church by being quiet. They advise the preacher to say nothing—but to say it beautifully. They insist that the church "play it safe" by not making anybody angry. They say that "silence is golden," and forget that it could be golden because it's "yellow" with cowardice.

There are others who are quick to suggest that the church conform to the world's slow stain rather than to transform. Their conception of the church is that of a superior type of club, where the majority opinion always holds and no leader would dare say anything to hurt the popularity of the club or of the leader himself. Their conception of the preacher is that he should be a kind of Al Capp character — remember Elderberry Eggnog? — who was to be made president because he never, never said anything controversial? "Prophesy smooth sayings" is advice both ancient and new from those who suffer no hurt of their people, unless it be a kind of "halo-tosis," their self-made halo being too tight. The Master cautioned: "Beware when all men speak well of you."

We must never forget that this is the self-centered religion against which the downtrodden masses of old Russia revolted and which provided the seedbed for Godless materialistic communism.

So let the church be the church. Let it, through its pastors and preachers, speak. Let it *also* speak

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through its members. Of course, in the Protestant tradition, if you disagree with the preacher, re-act; have "roast preacher" for lunch, but always remember that no man is worthy to step into that pulpit who has not been caught up in the tension between what *is* and what, in God's love, *ought to be*. He must speak from that tension, and it alone is enough to make him controversial. So, if your preacher is controversial in this day when controversy is paramount, then pray for him. Or, if your preacher is not controversial in such a day, pray for him that he may become so. You may not always agree—I doubt that you should—but you can thank God for a pulpit that makes you angry enough to *think*. So let the Church speak.

Ministry of Reconciliation

But how should it speak in our crisis? It must be pre-eminently a ministry of reconciliation. Its watchword might well be "Come, let us reason together, saith the Lord." This is no time for denunciation, for rigid reformation, or for simple-minded "do-goodism." We are to be channels of God's love and power. The church is a fellowship "interpreted by love." The one basic fact about us all is that we are all sinners who have fallen short and yet whom God still loves. The great fact about our church is that we belong to the church—it does not belong to us. And in spite of its failures, its betrayal, even its cowardice, the church remains Christ's body on earth in all the "tumult of her war." We are not our own, but all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. And he has given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

This must be the basis of our speaking, as laymen and preachers. This is our one hope of keeping open lines of communication with those who disagree. We cannot condemn and hope to redeem. The modern saint, Albert Schweitzer, has stated it so simply when he asks: "Why should I forgive anyone whom I think to be guilty of hatred, or lovelessness, or arrogance? I must forgive because I know that *I* have been guilty." Yes, we all like sheep have gone astray. Because there is so much evil in the best of us and so much good in the worst of us, there is a common ground of discussion and of hope.

To reconcile our differences does *not* mean to compromise our ideals. We can follow the Master in that he always condemned the sin but loved the sinner. And across the bridge of that love little, mean, and petty men walked into the sunlight of his grace. So can we, as we build bridges of sympathetic understanding between persons of differing opinions find ourselves closer to God and a solution to our crisis. We are not called to apologize for God nor to spend our energies in pious platitudes saying "peace, peace, where there is no peace." But if the church of our Lord can make of every preacher and every member an instrument of *His Peace*, then as his ambassadors we can proclaim a way out for our bewitched, bothered, and bewildered people.

We are called to be channels of his grace, instruments of his peace. And in a day when it is so ha to be tolerant of intolerance, may I suggest t elementary ways in which we may serve.

First, we shall remember the words of Paul Timothy as he wrote: "For God hath not given the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and a sound mind." We shall insist on "sound word *We shall not repeat rumors.* For in these days tension a rumor can be as deadly as poison— fact, it does poison the mind. Test the words th you hear. Do not believe every gossip and w tale. In recent days I have even heard a minister the gospel thoughtlessly repeat words that w calculated to incite hatred and fear. After an e barrassing session of tracing down the origin such words, he had to admit that not one of the was based in fact and that even if they were fa tual, his repeating them was unnecessary.

I plead with you, screen your words. Ask you self of every story: Is it true? That is, would I able to go on a witness stand and swear to i truth? If not, then refuse to repeat it. Second, is necessary? Even incidents that are true need n be repeated if they foster increased tension. Thir is it kind? For the Christian even truth is not ne essary to repeat unless it is kind.

Controlled Words

Second, we need "controlled words." Let us r frain from "trigger words" that are designed incite wrong actions. Such words as "naked force "majority," "states' rights" mean different thin to different people. For example, beware of th person who prates about "states' rights" when ra is mentioned yet who runs for office on the clai that he can get more from the federal governme for our state than anyone else. Some of th greatest legal minds of our day are concerne about the overlapping of federal and state power but altogether too many who want the federal go ernment to stay out of our state in matters school law welcome its funds for highways, hosp tals, social security, and every other item. You se it is simply good sense to look beyond the label And in the wild claims of what per cent of th people oppose the law no one can know for certai these things. In a great city of 120,000 people rowdy group that never totaled more than 700, in cluding the outsiders who came to vomit up thei hate, has set itself up as "the people." Remembe that when agitators shout that they are in th majority (and even if they were in majority, woul that make it right?) less than one per cent of city's population has brought such disgrace upo the city and state. Aye, it's still true—figures don' lie, but liars can figure.

Let us practice the control shown by Warre Spahn, that great pitcher for the Braves in th World Series. Remember when that heartbreakin three-run homer of Howard's seemed to snatch th game from Spahn's grasp? He was asked what h said when it happened and his reply was "O Heav ens!" Now, that reply was too mild even for me. think I reacted with stronger language than that Well, I didn't exactly say anything, but it was

ıe silence! Seriously, wasn't his action a sug-
n for us? If he could gain such magnificent
l over his body and words, refusing to let
ing cause him to become angry enough to
is game, shouldn't we covet such control for
ves that we do not lose that which is far
precious than a game?

is only under such control that we will be
to see through the half-truths, the trigger
, of those who would make us hate. And it is
through such control that we will be able to
to such half-truths as this: "You can't legis-
norals" thereby claiming license to interpose
will to any law you dislike. Of course no law
lant love in your heart. But never forget that
the beginnings of time, from Sinai through
otha and in our day, the upward march of
toward the Kingdom of God has been marked
ws which embodied ideals opposed by many
preferred the law of the jungle to the law of
Kingdom. No, to follow this half-truth is to
tion almost every statute against man's in-
anity to man.

herefore, let us speak sound words, controlled
ls, that we might be a part of the solution
er than a part of the problem of our day. For
in reasoning together that the great number of
ho seek a Christian solution shall find it. The
ver will *not* be found at the end of an argu-
t; it *can* be found at an altar. "Come, let us
on together, saith the Lord."

he altar suggests the greater ministry of recon-
tion, of being reconciled to God. For not only
ve face the task on the human level of bringing
of different opinions across bridges of under-
ding but we face the greater task of bringing
lives into line with God's will. And this second
istry is necessary if the first is to have Chris-
consequences.

Church Must Echo God

Not only must the church speak to those outside
fellowship; it must speak to us in our deepest
d. The Church must echo its God: "In re-
ning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and
confidence shall be your strength." Its invitation
es to each of us, not because the church be-
gs to us but because we belong to it. In all of
failures it says: "Come unto me, all ye that
weary and heavy laden. . . ." And none of us
withstand the pressures of our day without its
uge and strength.

You see, the church is not a gymnasium for
at saints but a hospital for the rest of us. It
ls us to an honest examination of our spiritual
; it invites us to be reconciled to that better self
lained for us by God. "He hath not given us a
rit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a
nd mind."

So the church, if she is true to her Lord, must
agnose and prescribe to cure our ills, that we
ght be made whole. In the spirit of her Lord,
e must love the patient while eradicating the
sease. Since the Master insisted that anything
ich hurts personality is wrong, it sometimes re-
quires spiritual surgery to make us whole again. And, to be perfectly honest about it, sometimes the hurt of such surgery is not at all welcome to us.

I do *not* like it—but the Church must deal with my false pride, my arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, my ego, my limited love, my neurotic resentments. All these ruin my mental balance, invade my peace. And the more that I refuse to admit them as my own sickness the more they spread, like a cancerous growth. Often it is the malignancy of hate that blinds me to my own need. How easy it is to blame everyone else for our troubles. In fact this might be called the sickness of the Southland. For years we have wanted to blame other areas, other people. Some of the cries during the present crisis remind you of the man in England who murdered his own father and mother and then based his plea for mercy on the fact that he was now an orphan. No, it isn't others—we have all sinned and fallen short. And only the Great Physician can make us whole.

The church must remind me, Bill Byrd, prejudiced southerner that I am, born in Mississippi, reared in Louisiana, now at work in Arkansas, that hate or love is not a matter of geography but of the human heart. "In Christ there is no East or West, in him no South or North, but one great fellowship of love. . . ."

This, then, is our judgment. God sent not his Son into the world to condemn, but that the world through him might be saved. It is not a matter of Courts, State or Supreme, but of God's law and God's love. "Be ye reconciled to God. . . ."

This is our ministry and our message. The answer lies not in great resolutions and strong statements adopted by ecclesiastical or civic bodies. The answer lies with *you* and with *me* and *our* ministry, for we all are called.

We must start here. For greatness is an individual virtue, and this *is* the time for greatness. It must begin here at the altar of your church and at the altar flame within your heart. Our beginnings will determine our destination. Roark Bradford used to love to tell the story of a man driving to Paducah, Kentucky, and who asked the way from an Arkansas native by the side of the road. After telling the miles and pointing out the crossroads, after many false starts, the native finally blurted: "To tell you the truth, Mister, this ain't no place to go to Paducah *from*."

Perhaps that is it. We have been trying to reach the destination—a Christian solution for our crisis—by starting from our own wisdom and strength. Today let us start here at His altar and then rise up as men of God. For this is time for greatness. Start with *Him* and *His* words that ours may be the healing words of reconciliation—

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Inasmuch as ye have done unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

An Advent Wreath of Meditations Based on the 'O' Antiphons

By Martin E. Ma

A Time of Longing

AGES of longing shape these weeks of expectation; centuries of hope crystallize now into days of awareness. This is Advent, the season before Christian fulfillment in the annual observance of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. With this beginning of a new church year the quickened rhythms of redemption recall a long past and suggest an urgent future. Grasping for a language that telescopes that past but is not content to live in it, Christian people have customarily turned to the Old Testament and the richness of its promise in the record of those who longed, who hoped.

Since before the eighth century the 'O' Antiphons have served to address the coming Christ in terms reflecting these ancient scriptures. They are the jewels in the crown of this royal season, seven lights on an Advent wreath around which we can gather every year. These responsive sentences were designated for use in the vesper service beginning on December 17 and lasting until the day before Christmas eve. They can serve now as a garland for the door of the church in the moment before it opens to reveal the lights of a new Christmas.

I

O WISDOM, who proceeds out of the mouth of the highest, boldly reaching from end to end of the earth, and sweetly ordering all things:
Come to teach us the way of wisdom.

"I alone compassed the circuit of heaven . . ." Ecclesiasticus 24:5.

Christ will reveal. That is the promise behind the first response. It points to God's definitive act of self-disclosure: "Come to teach us!" But Jesus Christ did not come to teach items of information about religious matters or to instruct or indoctrinate a coterie in theological affairs. When he taught, he revealed the eternal purpose of God—by pointing to himself. Rudolf Bultmann has suggested that while Christ announces in the Fourth Gospel that he will declare what he saw and heard with the Father, he never conveys anything specific or concrete that he has seen or heard. The Father has sent him and he is the revelation.

Contained in this revelation in a person, th was cosmic purpose, and the liturgical gem bef us is a prism which confronts us, reflecting a mic scope. The apocryphal Ecclesiasticus had into the mouth of Wisdom the breadth of this elation: "I alone compassed the circuit of heave The antiphon picks up the trail of this Wisd and applies it to one who said, "I am the Trut It occasions a question: is this the Truth men seeking in this season? Or, in the voice of W. Auden's Herod, should we be concerned that th wish justice and truth to be put away as inco prehensibles and eternity to be shrugged off cause it generates ennui? A world that shri from soul-size problems is not likely to turn t revelation that "reaches from end to end of earth" and which brings order out of a comforta chaos.

But the motion of this prayer carries us a st beyond the shrug and the shrinking, for it beck the arrival of Wisdom in the form of a child: af all, everybody knows and understands the chi This is what, at first glance, makes Christians se so attractive: here is packagable, confinable, so size mystery. We can live with this in our matt of-fact world. Or so we think.

II

O LORD and Leader of the House of Israel, who peared to Moses in a burning flame and who gave the on Sinai:
Come to redeem us with outstretched arms.

"And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a fla of fire . . ." Exodus 3:2.

The Christ who reveals will redeem. This is t point of the response that turns to a moment the life of the Old Testament when the Leader the House of Israel called a nation up from slaver He appeared in the forms of nature, with a fla and a bush. As we advance upon Christmas a the redemption it signals we pass the numino signs of nature. There will be a stir to the seas and an electric excitement in the air. There will days so crisp and clear and brilliant that we w be able to fancy again that we see the paths Bethlehem and hear the ring of the bark of a she herd dog whose master is on the way to worsh the Child of mystery. Nights will fall, so excitingl still that the stars we see against the blue-bla interstices will remind us of a star we heard abo long ago. We do not have to be children t respond.

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is symbol dare not long detain us from the
y to which it points. The tongue of flame in
lush was not an end in itself, an example of a
echnical Deity showing off to Moses. It sig-
l a vocation. It heralded a turning-point in
istory of a people who had to be saved from
thing for something, from slavery to redemp-
reedom. The call in nature in this season is
t not only to dazzle but to point to an ac-
that concerns us all.

III

O ROOT of Jesse, who stands as a banner for the peo-
s, before whom kings are to hold their tongues, and
om nations shall earnestly seek:
Come to free us, and do not delay long.

. *"The root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the oples; him shall the nations seek . . ."* Isaiah 11:10.

he Christ who redeems will attract men. The
re of this third antiphon recalls a confused
scattered people, guided too often by uncer-
trumpets, by kings with poor counsel, by cryp-
anners timidly unfurled. Advent clears the air.
ew ensign is elevated to confound the proxi-
e principalities and penultimate powers: "the
of Jesse, who stands as a banner." Isaiah pro-
nced the universal significance of the season
of its center.
ut a good deal has happened since this anti-
n was written. Can this ensign still clear the
which has become so cluttered with sight and
nd? The commerce of these days, the jangle of
hucksters, the advertising of the mountebanks,
blatancy of the pitchmen, the lengthening
ues as we line up to indulge in Christmas shop-
g all detract. To bewail the situation will ac-
plish little. We are as likely to impede on
hing commercialism as will a snowflake slow an
ress train, or a St. Bernard retard an avalanche.
Our fault resides in our failure to recognize that
ernal blindness, not external detail, confuses the
ion of the banner. The world has left Whitsun-
, another high and holy day, virtually un-
ched—yet the Church does not observe it more
ause it is left to itself. The fault is not in our
rchandisers' tinselled stars but in the trappings
our own lives and in the blindness of our own
ion. Refreshing, is it not, to share a prayer that
ts through all of this with a desperate cry for
l? And do not delay long!

IV

O KEY of David and Sceptre of the House of Israel, who opens and no one closes; who closes and no one opens:
Come and lead out of prison the captives who sit in the darkness and shadows of death.

"If he shuts a man in, none can open . . ." Job 12:14.

The Christ who attracts men will free them. Im-
ediately biblical pictures come to mind, particu-
rly the New Testament view of the church's valid
tion in opening or closing in the name of Christ.
his response counters the words of Job for it
peaks only of opening, of the act of creating free-
dom. This freedom grows out of the life we begin to follow from cradle to calvary, from Christmas through Good Friday, to Easter.

St. Paul liked to dwell on the condition of men who once were prisoners. "You were slaves of sin . . . you he made alive." Or, in the language of Christmas, "When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law." Finally, "The Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death."

The distractions of a diseased and dying world which camouflages its despair by frantic activity is not what had pulled us from the Christ of Christmas. Rather it was, in the words of an ancient prayer for Advent, "the threatening peril of our sins." Little wonder that, from such a captivity, we look for a key—and expect to find it.

V

O DAY-STAR, Brightness of the light eternal and Sun of justice:
Come and enlighten those who sit in the darkness and shadows of death.

. . . *"When the day shall dawn upon us from on high . . ."* Luke 1:78.

The Christ who frees will enlighten " 'Tis the yeares midnight . . . and the Sunne is spent," wrote John Donne in this season. 'Tis the soul's midnight, and the Sun is coming. Another Advent Collect prays, "Lighten the darkness of our hearts." Little pseudo-lights catch our eye just before Christmas to make us forget about the human darkness that pervades human activity. The spirit of neighborliness and general good cheer generated by the climate of the Christmas season itself makes us forget the need for light.

There have always been those who thought that the prophets were spoil-sports to bring up a matter such as this. They thought that of the prophet of the first Advent, John the Baptist. It took considerable effort for him to call them to the realities about human existence. There is something comfortable about familiar darkness. We tend to share the situation of the little girl who could not sleep in the dark at her grandmother's house but could do so very well at home because "that's my own dark"—the protective and warming kind.

The radicalism of the Baptist's call lay in the way it pulled people from the forms of protection that covered them into the daylight of exposure. The Christian, too, tends to avoid the exposure of the morning until he recognizes there the Day-star, the brightness of the light eternal. He has then, again, anticipated Christmas.

VI

O KING and Desire of nations, the cornerstone who makes all people one:
Come and save man whom Thou didst form out of clay.

"For he . . . has made us both one . . ." Ephesians 2:14.

The Christ who enlightens will rule in his bright

kingdom. The purple that is the season's color is a symbol not only of penitence but also of royalty. Despite its attraction, men try to limit the extent of His sovereignty.

One way to do this is to narrow its concerns to the "religious" part of life, to worship, to Sunday. But the moment-by-moment life of our every day demands a different perspective. "If the activity of the clergyman is to consist in an attempt to tow the community's freight-ship nearer to eternity, then the whole collapses and amounts to nothing, for a human life cannot, like a canal boat, remain in the same place until next Sunday." (Kierkegaard)

Another way is to fail to prepare. An anonymous old song describes the flurry that precedes the coming of an earthly king: the setting of fine Spanish tables, with every sconce and candlestick made bright.

> Thus if a king were coming would we do,
> And, 'twere good reason too;
> For 'tis a duteous thing
> To show all honour to an earthly king,
> And after all our travail and our cost,
> So he be pleased, to think no labour lost.
> But at the coming of the King of Heaven
> All's set at six and seven:
> We wallow in our sin,
> Christ cannot find a chamber in the inn
> We entertain Him always like a stranger,
> And, as at first, still lodge Him in a manger.

Or, for another dodge, we fail to recognize the unitive character of his rule. This king and desire of nations "makes all people one," breaking down the wall of partition between man and man. With that in mind, we can begin to be precise about Christmas.

VII

O EMMANUEL, our King and Lawgiver, the Hope and Savior of the nations:
Come to save us, O Lord our God.

"A young woman shall . . . bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel . . ." Isaiah 7:14.

The Christ who rules will save. The New Testament evangelist recalled a description hidden away in the prophecies of Isaiah to portray the wonders of the new age: it stands before us still as a portrait of the Child who is Emmanuel, "God with us" in his saving activity. But if we elaborate on this, we have tiptoed beyond Advent and anticipated Christmas. There is, now, only a moment. Advent seems to be the just-can't-wait season. With a directness unparalleled in the collects, prayers and hymns of the rest of the church year its liturgical fragments address themselves to Jesus Christ himself. There is a prayer which with all the pointedness of these 'O' Antiphons personalizes the movement we have followed from the cosmic through the natural and the national to the individual heart. With it, all the candles of the Advent wreath sparkle:

> Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child
> Make Thee a bed soft, undefiled
> Within my heart, that it may be
> A quiet chamber kept for Thee. Amen.

And In Those Days . .

By Alan S. Miller

AND in those days a decree went out from
great ruler of the sovereign state, and in
wisdom he did decree that henceforth the sn
colored children should not enter his school, lest
white children therein be corrupted. And he
send forth his troops, and he did boldly and brav
declare himself to be "Protector of all Childre
and his bravery did go before him.

And in that region there were other wise n
keeping watch o'er their flock by day, and t
were rich and poor, and young and old. Yea,
manner of men did they include. And they,
did show forth their bravery and concern and t
did manfully, and with one spirit, stand beh
their brave leader and wise prophet and follow
down the quickly descending, twisting road he
chosen for them. And they did shout "Hosanna"
he went before them.

And lo, there did appear unto them seve
small children of color, and the souls of the w
were filled with fear. And their faces did tw
with hatred as they beheld their small, dread e
mies. And they bravely, in the midst of their m
did come forth. And they found courage in th
number and they did set upon the small ones, a
they bravely and courageously did hurl sto
and sticks at the children, and hurl obscenities
them, yea, even unto those who were of tender a
And hatred did fill the streets, yea, even as wat
do fill the river beds.

And their work was well done. For, lo, the sm
ones with soulful eyes and hanging heads
return unto their homes, the jeers and taunts a
fire filled eyes still burning and searing their mem
ries; and they did recall that their great land h
oft been called the "land of the free and the hom
of the brave." And they did wonder!

And the sovereign ruler did behold the spe
tacle from behind locked and guarded doors, a
he did cry out with a loud voice, "See, I told y
so." And in his self-righteousness he did defe
himself and his followers before all who passed b

But there did lurk one small doubt within t
barred windows of his soul: Was this truly the w
of God, or just the will of man? And there c
come unto him a still, small voice. And though
tried to shut it out, it would not still. And, ye
it did become louder and louder, but he, throu
manly effort, did quiet it.

But, lo, the voice shall come again, and the wor
will one day burn more deeply; and the words w
bring shame and remorse, and the brave men a
true who so nobly defended their cause shall ha
their heads, and they, too, shall wonder.

For the words did say, and the words shall sa

> Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

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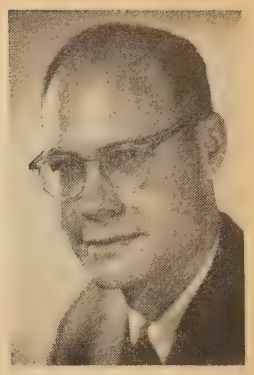
Presbyterian Church, New Orleans, Louisiana.*



Afraid of the Crowd

By James B. Ashbrook

ACH year in our colleges and universities fresh- men men and women sit on pins and needles, ndering how they can possibly stand the anxiety waiting to find out whether they have been dged. When the anxiety is over, some are ec- tic with joy; others are shaken with heartache.

The importance which students place on rush- is greatly exaggerated, but it points to a uni- sal experience. That experience is the desire to ong, to be a part of a group, to be accepted and be acceptable. No matter who we are, we each l that desire to belong to a family or a fraternity, a church or a club, to a group or a gang. We nt to feel we have roots somewhere. We want to l the comfort of the familiar.

At the same time there is another need which is o present. It is the desire to be ourselves, to be ividuals, to be persons in our own right. The ling of warmth we get when someone calls us by me is a sign of this desire to be known as an in- vidual. The feeling of satisfaction we feel when accomplish something is an indication of this sire to be a person.

Thus, we find within ourselves a double need. On e one hand, the need to belong. On the other nd, the need to be ourselves. All too often, how- er, the need to belong clashes with the need to a distinct person. We feel uneasy at the over- helming pressure to conform, yet we are afraid of e alternative—the alternative of being lonely. fraid of being left out, we feel we have to give in.

There is an incident in the Old Testament that idges the centuries and cuts right to the heart of e relation of the person to the group.

Under the leadership of King Saul the Israelites feated the Amalekites. The prophet Samuel had ade clear to Saul exactly what God demanded in e light of the victory. The particular demands e irrelevant at this point. What is relevant is that aul failed to do what was demanded. When amuel confronted him with his failure, Saul ex- ained what had happened. The explanation is an nazing revelation of the subtle relation of the in- dividual to the crowd. "I have sinned," Saul con- fessed, "because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice."

The powerful king turns out to be a frightened man. Instead of being a leader, he is a follower. Instead of challenging his people to their best, he gives in to their worst. His personal convictions capitulate to the group's demands. His need to be- long overwhelms his need to be himself. His fear of the crowd crushes his freedom as a person. "I have sinned because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice." Here is the everlasting picture of the stranglehold of conformity.

Beatitudes Relevant

Set in contrast to that fear is the freedom of the person which Jesus describes. In the Beatitudes he sketches the truly blessed life. Perhaps you never looked at the Beatitudes from the standpoint of what they say about the relation of the need to belong with the need to be a person, but each one of them is like a hammer smashing the fragileness of conformity. Here is a paraphrase that expresses this dimension of the Beatitudes.

> Blessed are those who feel their spiritual need—those who do not go along and accept but who feel the tension between what is and what might be, who feel uncomfortable, who question, search, long for something more.
>
> Blessed are those who mourn—those who experience tragedy and heartache, who do not say everything is all right when in fact everything is all wrong.
>
> Blessed are the meek—those who do not ride roughshod over others, who do not manipulate and bend them to their control, who allow others to be persons precisely because they themselves can be persons.
>
> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness—those who do not accept easy slogans and pat answers and pious platitudes, whose very guts ache for the substantial and the real.
>
> Blessed are the merciful—those who feel with others, who really know others as persons and do not treat them as pawns.
>
> Blessed are the pure in heart—those who have a singleness of purpose, who cut through the sham and the superficial to the serious and the genuine.
>
> Blessed are the peacemakers—those who reconcile differences without obliterating individuality, who can give of themselves without giving up themselves.
>
> Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake—those who stand for truth in spite of consequences, whose freedom is stronger than their fear.

Jesus goes on to speak of the salt of the earth as

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those who possess cleansing and sharpening power instead of tasteless sameness, and the light of the world as those who give direction and guidance instead of aimlessness.

Each one of these sayings stands like a rock of Gibraltar against the pounding seas of conformity. Each one points to permanence. Each stands in contrast to the frightened vacillation of Saul's "I have sinned because I feared the people and obeyed their voice."

Let's take a closer look at this double need each of us has: the need to belong to a group and the need to be a distinct person. What exactly is the relationship between ourselves as persons and ourselves as a part of a group?

Inevitable Tension

First of all, we recognize there is and there will always be a tension between our needs as individuals and the needs of the groups to which we belong. There can never be a perfect harmony. We find ways of minimizing the conflict of interests, but there can never be a permanent peace between ourselves and the crowd.

In the 1880's, Lucius Lamar of Mississippi stood up in the Senate of the United States. He was about to speak to an issue in which feelings ran deep and fierce. He had just been informed of the expressed will of his home state legislature that he vote a certain way. His body shook with agitation as he rose. His voice trembled with emotion as he spoke. He stood there a massive but lonely figure on the Senate floor.

"Mr. President," he said, "Between these resolutions (of my state) and my convictions there is a great gulf. I cannot pass it. . . . Upon the youth of my state . . . I have always endeavored to impress the belief that truth was better than falsehood, honesty better than policy, courage better than cowardice. Today my lessons confront me. Today I must be true or false, honest or cunning, faithful or unfaithful to my people. Even in this hour of their legislative displeasure and disapprobation, I cannot vote as these resolutions direct."*

Perhaps the break between the demands of the group and the desires of the individual are not always that dramatic. But every day of our lives we are faced with the choice: either surrendering what we believe to be true, or possibly being rejected by the group. Whenever a group insists upon our giving up our individuality, it really doesn't care about us as persons. It only cares about us as pawns. It is interested in how to use us. There is and there always will be a tension between our needs as individuals and the demands the crowd makes upon us.

To Give In Can Destroy

The second insight about this double need to belong and to be ourselves is this: To give in to the crowd out of fear ultimately destroys both the crowd and ourselves.

At first, conformity does not seem very dangerous to the self. We can go along without much happening. For a long time we shall feel less conspicuous, more accepted, less afraid. But gradually something begins to happen.

Every time we give up our right to be ourselves in order to be a part of the group, we lose a little bit of ourselves. Every time we surrender our freedom as persons we become more and more pawns. Our outer appearance takes precedence over our inner self until the inside loses all meaning whatsoever.

The more standardized a machine is the better it is. But the more standardized a person is the less he is a person. We see this in the typical glamour girl. She tries to fit the image of the suburban doll. Her hair style, the cut of her clothes, her posture, her walk, the honeydew that drips from her lips, all these are consciously shaped to fit the mold. What usually results is that she is all vogue on the outside and all vague on the inside. She ends up a pleasant puppet but seldom a real person.

When we continually give in to the crowd we increasingly feel disgusted with ourselves. Instead of overcoming our fear, we become more frightened. Instead of feeling more accepted, we feel less accepted. For the acceptance we feel is not an acceptance of what we are but of what we appear to be. We live in mounting terror that the group will find out we are not what it thinks we are. We get to the point where it is easier to go along and feel miserable than to be ourselves and feel freedom.

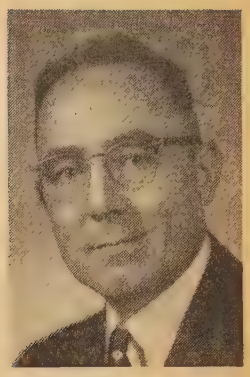
This inevitable destruction of ourselves leads to an inevitable destruction of the group. We actually render a disservice to the crowd when we allow ourselves to be swallowed up by it. You see, the vitality of the group ultimately rests on the vitality of the individuals making up the group. If we cease to be persons and become pawns, eventually there are no persons left even to manipulate the pawns.

This is illustrated by the experience of a friend of mine. He went to work in a fair-sized eastern industrial firm. When he joined the company he began asking disturbing questions. He continually found himself coming up with the unconventional comment. The rest of the men passed it off as naiveté. My friend just didn't know any better. He would learn. He would soon find out it was wiser to go along. It was safer not to raise objections. But my friend did not learn. He kept on asking the embarrassing question. He kept on probing for right answers. He refused to be satisfied with expedient answers. It became increasingly clear that the firm had fallen into serious straits precisely because everyone had just gone along out of fear. They all knew the shortsightedness of many policies, but they likewise felt it was safer to be a "good guy." It was wiser to show a cheerful acceptance of the status quo. As a result, the firm was gradually losing more and more of its leadership in its particular field. As the people let their own creativity be destroyed because of fear of the company, so they were inevitably destroying the creativity of the company itself.

(Continued on page 21)

*John Kennedy, *Profiles in Courage* (New York: Harper). Used by permission.

e Nub of the Difficulty—
e Have to Take Both



Citizens of Two Worlds

By Howard L. Stimmel

OW can we go about being Christian in today's society? This question and the misgiving ich often lies behind it baffles the minds of many vout people and demands our serious attention.

As a background for our answer, let us note that ristians are called upon to be citizens of two rlds at the same time. Two of St. Paul's state-nts illustrate this fact in his experience and in rs. When Paul was taken into protective custody Jerusalem after a mob had tried to make away th him, the conversation between Paul and the bune in charge turned to the subject of Roman izenship. The tribune exclaimed proudly, "I ught this citizenship for a large sum." And Paul plied, "But I was born a citizen." Paul was a izen of Rome,—that was one of his worlds. But little later, writing to his Christian friends in ilippi, Paul said this: "We, however, are free izens of Heaven." There you have it. Paul was citizen of two worlds at the same time, a citizen Rome and a citizen of Heaven.

Obviously, there were conflicts at many points tween Paul's obligations to Rome and his obli-tion to Heaven. But he was a citizen of both rlds at the same time. His problem as a Chris-an was essentially one with ours: How to belong a higher, Christian order of life while at the me time holding membership in an earthly order ntaining many unchristian elements.

The Christian's Problem

Now the nub of the difficulty for Christian dis-pleship lies in the fact that we cannot settle for ie world or the other. We have to take both. The sult is that a Christian never feels fully at home this world. He always has the uncomfortable eling that he does not quite belong. This, I sup-ose, is why the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews eclared that the great men of faith always "ac-nowledged that they were strangers and exiles on ie earth." One of the phrases often heard at the vanston Assembly of the World Council of hurches in 1954 was "The pilgrim people of God." s one of the study commissions put it in their preliminary report: The Church knows "itself to be a colony of the heavenly fatherland planted in an alien territory and (looks) forward to an end lying beyond the earth."[1]

Since this is the situation we face in our Christian experience, what are the principles that ought to govern our attitude and behavior as we seek to make the most of our dual citizenship? I should like to suggest four things.

Tension Permanent

In the first place, we must accept a sense of inner tension as a permanent aspect of our experience. For at least as long as we live in this world, there will always be more or less painful dilemmas and difficult choices which Christians must make.

The truly great personalities of history have not been primarily the peace-of-mind enthusiasts but the troubled souls. Take Jeremiah, for example. It is probably not quite fair to call him the "weeping prophet." But he was a deeply troubled soul because he felt within himself the tug of war between the heavenly and the earthly loyalties. Or what does Albert Schweitzer mean in our own day when he says that only at rare intervals has he felt really glad to be alive? What does he mean if not that he accepts permanently the fact of inward tension growing out of his dual citizenship?

Abraham Lincoln hated slavery as much as he hated anything.

But Lincoln was a citizen of a land in which the federal constitution gave some aid and comfort to the slavery system. Later as president of the United States he was sworn to uphold the Constitution. In a letter to Joshua F. Speed he once wrote, "I confess I hate to see the poor creatures hunted down and caught and carried back to their stripes and unrequited toil; but I bite my lips and keep quiet." Then he went on to say that the sight of slavery had always been a torment to him and that he was one of "the great body of Northern people" who "crucify their feelings in order to maintain their loyalty to the Constitution and the Union."[2]

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1. Report of the Advisory Commission on the main theme of the Second Assembly, p. 14. *The Christian Hope and the Task of the Church.*

2. *Abraham Lincoln,* Vol I, Edited by Nicolay and Hay (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1907). Used by permission.

As with slavery, so with other issues where the heavenly and the earthly orders are in conflict. If as Christians we ever lose the sense of being at some points out of harmony with the world, then we had better re-examine our loyalties. At all costs, we must keep up that creative tension!

Work for Heavenly Earth

Secondly, we must work faithfully to help bring the order of this world a little closer to the pattern of the heavenly citizenship. As someone put it, we must try to bring about a kind of world in which it is easier to be good.

It is often noted that there is practically nothing in the New Testament by way of a program for reforming society governmentally, and it is easy to see why. The early followers of Jesus had no voice in government. It must have seemed to them almost useless even to think about bringing to pass much improvement in the empire through their efforts. Then too, the early Christians expected the immediate end of the world as they knew it. If God were going to step into the picture and abolish the old order at a stroke, why bother about improving that order a little here and there?

Our situation today, however, is different. We, the people, do have some voice in government. We can work together to bring about various kinds of social change. Furthermore, barring some man-made atomic catastrophe, we expect that the present world is likely to continue for a long time. Christian social obligation looks different to people who live in a continuing society than it does to those who think they are living in a world which is shortly coming to an end.

Granted this difference between the early Christian world outlook and ours, there are nevertheless, in the teachings of Jesus certain indications of what Christians are to be and do in this continuing world. Consider four highly suggestive figures of speech: A mustard seed, the salt of the earth, the leaven in the lump, the light of the world. A seed is a tiny thing, but it is vital and great things come of it. So is the reign of God in the lives of individuals and communities. Life is flat and society is in process of decay. But the lives of dedicated people are like salt which gives savor to life and which acts as a social preservative. Leaven, like a seed, is a seemingly small element by the side of a large lump of dough. But put the leaven into the lump and soon the whole is raised. The world is a dark place and very much in need of light. But Christians are called to be torchbearers. Even a little light can make a great difference in a blackout.

Self-Sacrifice

Seed, salt, leaven, light—such are Christ's followers who in their own way and place work faithfully to help make the order of this world approximate more nearly the heavenly pattern. God does not require that we wholly succeed. But he does require us to be wholly faithful to the spirit of his reign.

Thirdly, those who seek to fulfill their dual citizenship must espouse the principles of self-commitment and self-sacrifice. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." As the seed is buried in the earth and ceases to be merely a seed, so must Jesus, so must those who follow him, plant themselves in the furrow of the world's life.

Few Christians carry their devotion to Christ's cause to the point of losing their lives on account of it. But there is more than one way of losing one's life. A cause may require of us one or more "little deaths." Our popularity may have to undergo crucifixion. We may have to crucify a friendship. We may have to lose our job if the contradiction between the job and the ideals of Jesus is too great. A Christian may have to crucify his political ambitions if the party he represents takes a wrong stand on some moral issue.

William Laurence Sullivan, a former Roman Catholic priest, became convinced that for him the way of duty was to leave his church and become a Protestant. He said that the struggle over that decision was like a lonely flight over an ocean or over a desert. He had to take it when a friend called him a coward and a hypocrite, a man unworthy of a scholar's status. But toward the close of his autobiography, *Under Orders*, Sullivan summed up his philosophy in terms like these: "The first article of my creed is that I am a moral personality under orders. . . . Life is a sublime peril." A man finds himself when he is "humbly and completely consecrated to a resplendent obedience."

Faith in God

All of this, however, would be incomplete without a final word. To be a full-fledged citizen of these two worlds requires faith in a God who can be trusted to understand, to forgive, and to bring his own cause to ultimate victory.

To do the kind of things I have mentioned and to do them with grace and sanity requires the sustaining power of a great faith. In the Christian faith are to be found the resources which this kind of adventuring makes necessary. Our faith begets confidence that the God who made us and who is ever with us understands and cares about us and our situation. God knows our frailties and defects better than we do. He knows what we can stand. He knows just where our breaking point is.

Moreover, God forgives us. In struggling with the rival claims of the earthly and heavenly citizenship we not only fail repeatedly but we fall into sin. But God can be trusted to remove the burden of our guilt and give us grace to try again.

And then our faith inspires us to believe that God holds the outcome of the human struggle in his hands. Ultimate responsibility for the way things turn out does not lie with us but with him.

The late Dean Inge reminds us of the day when in the English Commonwealth Bulstrode Whitelock was ambassador to The Hague. One night, full of concern for his country's welfare, he was trying in vain to get to sleep. Finally his manservant said, "Sir, may I ask you a question?" "Certainly," the Ambassador replied. "Sir, did God

dern the world well before you came into it?" doubtedly." "And will he rule the world well n you have gone out of it?" "Undoubtedly," en, sir, can you not trust him to rule the world while you are in it?" And then, as the story , the tired Ambassador turned on his side and t to sleep.[3]

he faith that this is God's world, that he made nd rules it, and will in the end bring his own se to victory—this is a good faith to sleep on night and to work on by day. It is our pro- ndest spiritual resource at times when both our ngth and our patience are tried. It is the faith persons who, because they are trying to be istian, must live in two worlds at the same time. this sense, "Let your light so shine before men, t they may see your good works and give glory your Father who is in heaven."

Fifteenth-century carol

HEE cam al so stille
To His modir's bour
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on flour.
Hee cam al so stille
Ther His modir lay
As dew in Aprille
Yt falleth on spray.
Modir and maiden
Was never none but shee,
Well may such a ladye
Goddes modir bee.

Personal Prayer

ATHER, I shall make brush-strokes this day; may the finished canvas be a thing of beauty d meaning. Be with me in the emotional deci- ns . . . that the colors I choose be ever striving match thine . . . love, kindness, understanding, mpathy, unselfish-outgoing love. May my hand steady as I apply my life to the lives of others. all of the details, let me not forget the total rtrait desired. May there be such a blending of lors and brush-strokes; such a beautiful concep- n and expression of spiritual design that all of e individual parts may fit into a whole pleasing thee. But through the whole day, through my iving and perfecting, my erasing and doing again, rough my mistakes and earnest attempt to create iritual beauty, may I be ever conscious of Thee the Artist of matchless beauty looking over my oulder, suggesting, criticizing, encouraging me at I may make a canvas which reflects thee. O od, give me the strength to fulfill thy faith in e. Amen.—*Alvin D. Johnson, City Park Baptist hurch, Denver, Colorado.*

3. *The Interpreter's Bible,* Vol. IV (Nashville: Abingdon, 1955). oted from W. R. Inge *Lay Thoughts of a Dean,* (G. P. Putnam). sed by permission.

Afraid of Crowd

(Continued from page 18)

In trying to grasp the relationship between our need to belong to a group and our need to be ourselves, we have seen that there is an inevitable tension between our own needs and the demands the group makes upon us to belong. We have also seen that as we give in to the group's pressure we lose our own creativity and therefore the group itself ultimately loses its creativity.

There is a third insight which takes us even deeper into the heart of our fear of the crowd. The insight is this. The crowd has power only to the extent that we invest it with power. The crowd can mean only as much to us as we let it mean. The crowd can do to us only what we let it do.

At one stage of the Civil War the confederacy appeared to be dug in at Manassas with a tremendous battery of cannons and ammunition. The heavy artillery frightened the northern general into making a winter camp instead of attacking. When the southerners finally abandoned Manassas there was a startling discovery. The heavy artillery which had frightened them off was nothing more than logs painted black to look like cannons. Their apparent power had no relation to their actual power. The only reason that kept the northerners from attacking was that the northerners believed them to be cannons. They never suspected they might be painted logs.

Similarly we give the crowd the power it has. We can make it a dangerous cannon or we can see it as a harmless log. The crowd can do no more damage to us as a person than we are willing to let it do. The opinion of the crowd is only as powerful for us as we let it be. That does not mean we ignore what others think. That does not mean we dismiss what others think. That does not mean we dismiss how others react. But it does mean we always evaluate their attitude in the light of our own attitude. It does mean we always evaluate their values in the light of our own values.

Our own sense of self-acceptance and self-respect depends primarily on what we think of ourselves. It only depends secondarily on what others think of us. The inner attitude is more basic than the outer environment.

So the real adversary is not the crowd but myself. What I am really afraid of is not how the crowd feels about me but rather how I feel about myself. Not being able to accept myself, it becomes terribly important whether others accept me. If I am not bid to a certain sorority I take that as a conclusive judgment on me as a person. I say to myself, "They did not want me, therefore, I am no good." We take the group's attitude as final. But the conclusion "I am no good" has no inevitable relation to the premise "They did not want me." We fail to realize that the only final attitude is really the one we take toward the crowd and the one we take toward ourselves. We have the last word, not the crowd. The only power the crowd has

is the power we read into it. We make it a cannon or a log.

In the crucial days of 1941 Winston Churchill commented, "Nothing is more dangerous . . . than to live in the temperamental atmosphere of a Gallup poll, always feeling one's pulse and taking one's temperature. . . . There is only one duty, only one safe course, and that is to try to be right and not to fear to do or say what you believe to be right."

Churchill is pointing to a peace which the world can neither give nor take away. Here is a freedom from the fear of the crowd. Here is a certainty that we do not have to sacrifice ourselves on the altar of conformity. In Christ we know that God accepts us as we are. We are his and he is ours. The community of the churches does not exist for the surrendering and sacrificing of ourselves. The community of the church does exist for the finding and fulfilling of our true selves.

Greeting at Christmas

I SALUTE you. There is nothing I can give yo which you have not; but there is much tha while I cannot give you, you can take.

No heaven can come to us unless our hearts fin rest in it today. Take heaven . . .

No peace lies in the future which is not hidde in the present. Take peace . . .

The gloom of the world is but a shadow; behin it, yet within our reach is joy. Take joy . . .

And so at this Christmas time I greet you wit the prayer that for you, now and forever, the da breaks and the shadows flee away.

FRA GIOVANNI, A.D. 151

A Charge to the Congregation

At the Installation of a Pastor

By Charles C. Hoskinson

First Congregational Church, Glen Ellyn, Illinois

MINISTERS and delegates have met to conduct the examination resulting in this service of installation. The pastor-elect presented credentials to show that he has been properly trained and that he has been an ordained minister for some twenty years. Then he read a statement of his faith and responded to questions addressed to him. The examination demonstrated that he is a sincere, dedicated, and able minister of God, and this congregation is fortunate to have him as its leader.

Strangely enough, a similar examination of the congregation was not conducted. To be sure, the records of the church were presented and were found to be in order, but they showed only that this congregation voted to invite this man to become its pastor. They told nothing of the faith or the experience of this church, and they gave no evidence that its people are as worthy to call this minister as he is to become their pastor. Of course, this is the usual procedure: we examine the minister carefully, but not the congregation. This could mean that we are so certain of the character of the congregation that no question needs to be asked. But it could also mean that we are so uncertain of it that we want to avoid embarrassment. Whatever the reason may be for this traditional procedure, its wisdom is open to question. If it is proper to expect that a minister will be a man of God, it is equally proper to expect that the congregation which calls him will be a people of God.

This is particularly true in the free churches of our faith, for while it claims great privileges for its adherents, by the same token it lays upon them great responsibilities. On the one hand we cherish the four freedoms of our faith: freedom of the word, freedom of prayer, freedom of communio and freedom of judgment. On the other hand w recognize the disciples of discipleship: to be doe of the word, and not hearers only; to pray witho ceasing; to examine ourselves lest we approach th Lord's table unworthily; and to live in harmon with one another, having that mind in us whic was in Christ Jesus our Lord. The freedom of th word requires that each of us shall be a student the freedom of prayer requires that each of us sha be a priest; the freedom of communion requires tha each of us shall be faithful; and the freedom o judgment requires that each of us shall test hi understanding by a wisdom higher than his own.

Whether we speak of freedom or of discipline, w make no distinction between minister and congre gation, as if the one were free and the other subjec to control. Authority in this church does not res with the minister, however freely chosen or impres sively installed, for ordination does not make a ma infallible. Neither does it rest with the congrega tion, for the vote even of a democratic majority i not the measure of the truth. Pastor and peopl stand equal in privilege and equal in responsibility So in this service of installation we witness not onl the renewal of one man's dedication to the tasks o the ministry but the renewal of a people's dedica tion to the work of the church. All have receive the treasure of the gospel, all have heard the grea commission of our Lord, and all have made cove nant to walk in his ways made known or to b made known unto us. Pastor and people, therefore must seek to know and to obey His will together for he is the head of the church and under his sig they are committed to serve in unity of purpose.

Gets Under Your Skin

(Continued from page 5)

mean well, but I make mistakes. I love Peter. s so much like me." But then all of a sudden e stands Peter, publicly calling upon men to nt and follow Christ; is this you?—defying the rt to make him stop talking of Jesus; is this ?—daring to break over racial lines at the risk ll his friendships; is this you?—finally giving up life for Christ; is this you?

f you wander over a little farther in this book, ointing finger—no, not a finger—a rugged face h a look of pained compassion almost comes up n the page to some of us as James says: "My thren, show no partiality as you hold the faith our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if an with gold rings and in fine clothing comes your assembly, and a poor man in shabby thing also comes in . . . have you not made dis- ctions among yourselves? . . . But if you show tiality, you commit sin."

And so the light of this holy Word, so "quick discern the thoughts and intents of the heart," rns in upon us until finally Pilate drags us out the judgment seat with himself. Perhaps you ve not usually seen yourself in Pilate. But there are—just an ordinary human being put in a sition where you have to pass judgment on rist. Not all of us do as Pilate did; but there u are with the chance of doing the wrong thing confronted by Christ and faced with the neces- y of a decision about Him. Perhaps you try to t out of it by putting the responsibility on some- e else. Perhaps you try to wash your hands of whole business. But you can't do it. You can't ade it. There you are in the world. And there is rist. You've got to do something, if it's nothing ore than turn and walk away. You begin to see at it is you who are on trial. It is you, after all, o are judged. There's no hiding from it. You are anding before God.

And that is how you know God is speaking in is book. His word finds you, and you are face to ce with Him.

Transforming Love

The Bible also gets under your skin with a gen- e kind of transforming love and a strong help and high hope. From the steps of the judgment- ouse, where you found yourself, willy-nilly, con- onted by Christ, you are drawn outside the city ate to Calvary. You cannot escape that either. verything in this book leads up to it or follows om it. You can no more get away from the cross an you can get away from the evil in the world nd the suffering and the sorrow and the tragedy. is there, and you will never do away with it by utting your eyes. But the cross also means God imself has come down to be with us in the midst f all the blackness. It is the mark of both the agedy of the world and the love of God. And here you are at its foot. You know that you have some kind of guilty part in the tragedy. Then you hear the Master praying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." His love reaches down into your heart and gets hold of you like no other power you ever felt. And He begins to lift.

With Him you begin moving around again among the men and women of those pages, and you find the kind of strength they found. One hardened, middle-aged merchant seaman, whose tanker was torpedoed in the last war, and who, after being badly burned, had to keep himself afloat for 14 hours in salt-water, was asked by a friend of mine how he stood it. And he said: "I began to remember the psalms I had learned as a child. Their words came back to me. 'The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear.' 'In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord. . . . He gave ear unto me.' 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me.' They kept me alive. I couldn't have done it without them." God through this book was speaking strength to his heart.

Strength to the Heart

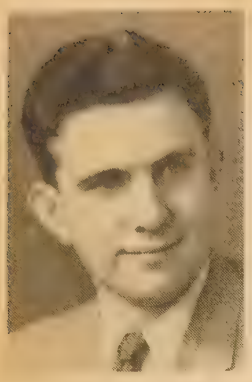
You find little persons there counting for much. Perhaps you see yourself in the crude fisherman, or the quisling tax-collector, or the educated defender of the old traditions, or the woman of all work in the house. We are all there. Shall we not let ourselves go on as we appear in those pages and meet the Master and let Him take us and make us into the foundation stones of His Church?

There are dreams born in those pages; the people in darkness see a great light; the day-star begins to rise. There is a voice calling, "Come over and help us." You cannot help feeling the hope and the thrust of something big. There is a Teacher confidently sending a ragged little group of friends out to establish a world-wide kingdom. There is a single missionary claiming the whole Mediterranean World for Christ. There is an old man with the vision of youth looking on to the triumphant achievement of the Kingdom of God. And your heart says, "Yes. Something is happening here. God is moving here. God is lifting up the eyes of men again. There is a kingdom that cannot be shaken."

But here I am in a hard, realistic, work-a-day world. Is this all a wild and foolish dream which has so been getting under my skin that it has seemed to be of God? If it is of God, it is real. But how can it be so? How can I know?

Then, as I wait outside those pages, there is a strange, simple, strong Man still saying, "Follow Me"; and I still ask, "Why should I?" but something impels me, and even in the impulse to respond I feel a purifying spirit; and the very question draws me out—rationally I know that I know nothing better than this Man of Galilee, and if I am going to follow the best I know, I have to go after Him.

It's as simple as that. You can't help it. It gets hold of you. If any word of God has ever been spoken, surely it sounds in this book. He that hath an ear, let him hear.



A Christmas Meditation

By R. Russell Peery

IF I were the Lord God, if I were the Almighty King whose thrones are in heaven and on earth, if I looked down upon the world of man, and if I saw in my great wisdom that man needed a savior, and if I decided that I loved the world so much that I would give it my very own son, I would bring this great event to pass in this way:

First, the mother would be taken to a palatial home, and there tender care would be given her while she awaited the magnificent birth. The greatest doctors and nurses would be on hand, waiting, watching, making certain that nothing would go wrong. The world would offer its most worthy hands to care for the new-born child.

And then I would see to it that the world be prepared for the coming of my son. The newspaper, radio, and television would gear themselves for the great expectation, and there would be no one who would not know of the coming of the Savior. And when the child would be born, I would declare that great feasts be held in all lands, and I would cause the nations to drop their guns and to soften their words, and there would only be time for rejoicing.

These are some of the things that I would do if I were God and if I were to make myself known to the world through the birth of a little child. How would I do it? I would form a Medical Committee and an Arrangements Committee and a Publicity Committee, and then the world would know that the great God Almighty had spoken by the giving of himself to mankind.

But I am not God, nor is my wisdom anything like His wisdom. I am merely a man—a man in need of salvation—and yet, as I look at what God has done, sometimes it causes me to wonder.

The birth of our Lord was no great event as far as the world knew. The beginnings were strange, to be sure, but they were most obscure. Joseph and Mary were wed, but there was some talk about their courtship—there were some who lifted their eyes. Then they journeyed toward Jerusalem. They were merely two among thousands making their way. The road was rough, the paths not easy for her who was great with child. And then that night in Bethlehem, that crowded night when there was no room for them in the inn, that night in which at last the Christ child was brought into the world in a stable. Was it easy? Was it warm? Was it without pain? And who knew of this great event? Truly, only a few. The simple shepherds up in the hills came down into the valley. Somehow, they knew. They in their utter simplicity had this thing revealed to them. And then there were those three seekers from the East whose constant heavenward search brought them to the foot of the manger. But the world saw no unusual star that night; it saw nothing out of the ordinary. Only another baby's cry was added to humanity. And the child had scarcely breathed the breath of life when his parents were forced to flee to the south to escape the wrath of a jealous king. What manner of life was this? Born in obscurity! Nurtured in flight! And yet, this was our Lord!

Strange Beginning

That was the beginning. We don't know much about it—even the people in those days didn't know much about it. Strange it seems that this was how it happened so many hundreds of years ago. But what is stranger still is that this Jesus who was born in obscurity never really did overcome it, and though a few men followed him from place to place after he left his father's carpenter's shop, and though it is true that he enjoyed a little popularity as a wandering teacher and healer, he started no great movement, so that when the authorities challenged his works, no one was able to stand with him. His trial was a sham, his crucifixion was a mockery of the truth, yet the nails pierced his flesh and the cross was the instrument of his death. So we ofttimes wonder "Where was God?" We wonder where He was when Jesus was born in Bethlehem; we wonder where He was when Jesus was raised on a cross on a hill outside Jerusalem.

Thus it is a natural thing to say, "If I were the great Creator, the Creator of Him who came to save the world would bring the savior into the wo in another way."

When you and I look across the c turies, when we try to find a star in t sky, and a manger, it is true that sentimentalize. We are so overjoy that Christ came to the world that see only what we wish to see. Someho we want the journey to Bethlehem be easy, and so we place Mary on donkey and she looks as leisurely a as comfortable as if the animal had 1957 automobile spring system. Son how we get angry at the ancient wo for refusing the night's lodging, and almost get our revenge when Jose and Mary go into what seems to be wonderful barn. It is as if the floor h radiant heat, as if hot and cold ru ning water were available, as if t straw were all clean, as if the anima did not smell. Somehow, we don't wa the birth to be painful, and so we co ceive of a delivery so smooth that it h no agony, no crying. Mary simply e ters the stable, great with child, a suddenly there she is, kneeling, wi clasped hands, adoring her new so This is the way we would like to ima ine the event without the struggle a unpleasantness—we would like to ma it sweet.

Acts of Worship

In a sense, our 20th century views the birth of Christ are acts of worshi We make the Christmas story pleasa in homage to God. We attempt to c serve the Golden Rule toward God that we try to do to him what we wou have him do to us. We surround h new-born son with all the security know, and we say to God, "Tha good!" and we pray to God, "Treat in this manner, Lord."

Surely as God looks down upon and as he sees us worshiping his chil he has compassion upon us. No dou he is appreciative of the attention ma is giving his son. But let us not be d ceived into believing that God w change the world because of our ador tion. Even if we could all be certa that all went well on the night of th Savior's birth, even if we knew that th journey and the birth were utter easy, we still cannot remove our ey from the years that followed. Na

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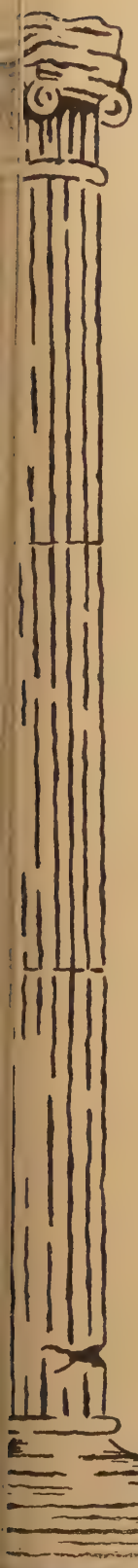
R. RUSSELL PEERY, *after graduating from Andover Newton Theological Seminary, was called to a pastorate in Alfred, Maine. He is now the associate minister of the Center Congregational Church, Manchester, Connecticut.*

For The Minister



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which fashioned the manger, pierced our Lord. Wood that held him secure as a babe, was fashioned to him as a man of thirty-three, in the form of a cross. Look to the earth and you see that his blood was shed. Look a little higher and you see the crowds, and they are shouting "Crucify him!" Look to the horizon and you see three crosses, and he is in the center between two thieves. Look to the sky, and if the clouds have gone and you see a star, even if it's the star of Bethlehem, its rays form a cross.

We do not wish to spoil Christmas by these reminders; rather, we wish that Christmas would mean more. The joy of this day is ours, not merely because there is a little one in a manger, but because he who was in the manger grew, and as he grew he wrestled with the principalities and powers which beset our world and finally overcame them—overcame them on a cross. Making the nativity beautiful and then divorcing it from life will give us an empty Christmas. This birth affects us not merely when we are on our knees. For we live and work and struggle; we know pain and sorrow, misery and discouragement. And he who grew up out of the manger challenged these things and won a victory over them.

We rejoice at Christmas time, not merely because God has done something, but because he has done something for us. "He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty."

The world has changed, and all because of a little child. We have changed because of him. Therefore, let us not merely clothe him in our security. Let us offer him the gifts of ourselves as we follow him from the cradle to the cross. Only as we see Him from this perspective can we in truth call him *Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

The Bible

(Continued from page 6)

cookbooks or dictionaries, textbooks on ethics or the most modern treatise on Christian theology, and after a prayer for guidance, open the Bible to the proper page. There are still plenty of people—not all of them by any means are on the hard benches of what have been rudely but not inaptly styled the "henhouse sects of Christianity"—who do precisely that sort of thing.

The other way to regard the Bible is very different. The Bible is not God's complete revelation. There are many subjects which are not hinted at, directly or indirectly, and thousands of problems for which no ready-made answers lurk in invisible ink. It is a library of many books written over a period of a thousand years by men who can properly be termed authors, not automatic dictaphones. It contains errors and contradictions, and they were not blandly incorporated either to serve as clues to strange discoveries or to test our faith. When Matthew quotes "And they took the thirty pieces of silver" as spoken "through Jeremiah the prophet," he was wrong. It was Zephaniah, not Jeremiah, who said it. The two accounts of the Flood cannot both be correct. In one account the waters prevail for 150 days, then gradually decrease, remaining on the earth for apparently one year and eleven days. In the other account they increase for forty days and forty nights; then after twenty-one days more they disappear. In the one account one pair of each kind of animal is taken into the ark; in the other, one pair of unclean, but seven pair of clean. If the Holy Spirit announced at the baptism of Jesus, *"Thou art* my beloved son, in *thee* I am well pleased," as Mark and Luke record, it did not say, *"This is* my beloved son, in *whom* . . . ," as Matthew recounts. If the flight into Egypt to escape Herod's executioners took place, it is scarcely likely that the young babe was publicly presented in the temple when the days of Mary's purification were fulfilled. If the appearance of the resurrected Jesus to his disciples took place in Galilee, as Mark implies and Matthew and John record, the same disciples could not have remained in Jerusalem as Luke explicitly asserts they were commanded to do and obediently did.

Profound Value

These contradictions and errors are not to be regarded as deliberately made to intrigue men to discover spiritual values, to veil mighty mysteries or to test subsequent readers' faith. They are of very ordinary and thoroughly mundane nature, and no book written by several authors has ever been or ever will be free from them. The Bible is of the profoundest value as it reveals men and women striving to meet the problems and demands of life, as it reveals their successes and their failures, their insights and their blind spots. In this quest again and again they made discoveries which are of the profoundest and most lasting value to us; but they are values, not because they give us ready-made answers for our questions and perplexities, but because they quicken and guide us to make fresh search. The Bible is worthless as an aid in solving a cubic equation or in discovering when the next train will leave for New York. It is priceless as an incentive to us to meet our problems as honestly and courageously as did many of those of whom it speaks.

The man who holds this second view will not find the solution for the education of women in Paul's word, "If they would learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home," nor for divorce in the tradition of Jesus' words in Mark, Luke, and Paul, or in the decidedly emended version provided by Matthew. He will realize that both Jesus and Paul were talking to men of the own day, not over the latters' heads us. The truest follower of Jesus is n the one who blindly repeats His wor or apes his ways but the one who tri in his own day to meet his own oft very different problem in the sa spirit of uncompromising loyalty as d his Lord and Master. There is nothi incongruous or theatrical in the confe sion: "I believe that many things whi Jesus said are true, but not just becau he said them." Thus the Bible is se as the partial record of man's insatiab curiosity, a quality which the man this point of view inclines to view as h greatest and most highly prized po session—his drive to ask the one que tion which must never be stifled despi the offense which it always brings authority and to ignorance—the que tion "why?" "Because God said so" no answer at all, for he is convinc that God has never said anything sa through human brains and huma mouths.

Finding Light

Again and again the man who hol this second view finds in the ancie stories precisely the light which needs to illumine his path; he follo it gratefully and gladly. At other time as he reads the pages from the pa an insight comes to him. He does n think that that was what the ear author meant; nevertheless it seems him tremendously important, and gladly uses it. He does not try to for the Bible to sponsor his view. He stat the case with complete frankness. H does not toy with the notion, so dear atomistic exegesis, that God in a mag cal way had hidden that insight the knowing that in the fullness of tim (say, A.D. 1957) it would be reveale Rather he believes that the mind the One he calls God is too vast to included between the covers of any o book, not to mention being compresse into any one life, quite regardless of th emphasis he places upon that on Rather, the God in whom he believ is revealing himself today as certain as he did in Palestine, even during th wondrous months when Jesus lived an labored.

Wholehearted Belief

He believes, it often seems to hi even more wholeheartedly if less the logically than do some of his neighbor in the Incarnation. He believes tha Jesus had both feet on earth, not one o earth and one in heaven. Thus when h hears Jesus speaking about being po sessed by devils, he believes that Jesu thought that was the case. But he hi self does not believe that that is the re explanation of insanity or mental physical disorder, and he has no sligh est intention of turning back to th ancient explanation. On the other han he would be equally scandalized to tr to manipulate the words of Jesus so a to form a buttress for his own view. and he looks with amazement at thos who would try to see in the findings

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many theological seminary juniors
he professor of homiletics after a
weeks of "higher criticism": "I
't preach a sermon on the story of
Garden of Eden because I don't
eve it is true."

Perversion of Bible

Thus he views with genuine alarm
at seems to him a perversion of the
le, a menace to genuine religion, and
adblock for the values of life, name-
the attempt by men (who, he is very
e, know enough to know better) to
n back the hands of the clock by
king about the Bible being a book
ich recounts "not history, but *sacred*
tory," to say that the only really
mentous, all-important, central wa-
shed events of life happened nine-
n hundred years ago, to declare that
vas then that the "age of fulfillment"
wned and then that the "conclusive
of God" took place, the decisive
ttle in the war which has really
termined the issue even though the
nistice has not yet been signed or
guns silenced.
He is greatly concerned when he is told that the proper interpretation of II Peter 1:20 is: "no prophecy of scripture carries with it its own interpretation," that is, that you cannot tell by reading it how it will ultimately turn out. Only in the light of its fulfillment can you be sure what God had meant by it. He deplores the constant and repeated attempt to set "revelation" in contrast to "reason," "worthless and natural man" to "atonement" and "sacrifice" and "regenerating spirit." He shivers when he reads approving words about allegorical interpretation; when he is told that modern critical biblical scholarship has gone to seed, and that "truth" exegesis must interpret "symbolically, sacramentally, and typically." To him all this seems a restatement of Kant's cynical suspicion of the Bible which led him to argue that while the literal meaning was all right for scholars, it must be given a moral metamorphosis for the unlearned; the Bible must be interpreted according to morals. This frightens him, for while he believes wholeheartedly in morals, he does not want "morals" pitchforked in in that way. It seems desperately dishonest.

Modern Standards Unjust

He is quite ready to agree that by present-day standards Samuel's hewing asunder of Agag or Samson's morals in general seem reprehensible; but he sees no justice or need of appraising ancient men on the basis of modern standards, and he feels it utterly dishonest and illegitimate to interpret these stories "symbolically or sacramentally or typically" in such a way as to suggest that this is what the Bible means, that this is what God actually wrote in invisible or sympathetic ink. He believes that there is no end to that road except stark disaster; that if "biblical research is becoming increasingly useless for systematic theology," as has frequently been suggested, and not in dulcet whispers either, it is a terrific indictment, not of biblical research, but of systematic theology; that the floodgates are being flung wide to fanciful and edifying exegesis and that the only criterion for judging what the original author meant is the particular view or preference of the theologian, who can buttress his every notion with a portentous off-stage "Thus said the Lord."

He is convinced, and nothing can shake him at that point, that if systematic theologians wish to use the Bible, as they very properly should, they must expect to pay the price of continued and continuous research, so that the results of biblical research will not be "increasingly useless." Let them know the nature of the Bible well enough that they can choose its wheat from its chaff. Then and only then can they speak out with convincing authority, using the wheat and warning against the peril of using the chaff.

If Jesus and Paul could really be believed to have lived in first-century Palestine and Asia Minor, not in twentieth-century America, it would tend to straighten out much addled thinking. We do not feel it necessary to clothe them in our present garb, but how we do love to fancy them speaking over the heads of those whom they purportedly were addressing to us "upon whom the ends of the ages are come." I can think of no better way of blasting them, and all others so manhandled, from the position of leadership and respect which they achieved and have been accorded.

"This is what Paul seems to have thought, but it seems to me that while that may have been a point of view entirely understandable, even admirable, in Corinth in A.D. 55, it would be unwise to apply it in New York—even Cambridge—in A.D. 1957; rather what appear to be the facts of life, as we are coming to know them, would seem to suggest that a very different course of procedure is necessary, and that it is by no means impossible that were Paul alive today, that is what he would say, since . . ." appears to me an honest and worthy and constructive statement. "This is what Paul *seems* to have said, but really his words, when interpreted symbolically, reveal that what God really meant was—" is dishonest and perverse. It has been said that the Bible has little to fear from its enemies but that it needs to be on its guard when it comes to some of its friends. Insofar as its friends have the disquieting and uneasy fear that the Bible needs to be tinkered up and rewritten, it has a right to fear.

Pulpit Calendar

Dec. 1—1st Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 8—Universal Bible Sunday.
Dec. 15—3rd Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 22—4th Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 25—Christmas.
Dec. 29—Sunday after Christmas.
Dec. 31—New Year's Eve.
Jan. 1—New Year's Day.
Jan. 5—Twelfth Night: Epiphany Eve.
Jan. 5-13—Universal Week of Prayer.
Jan. 6—Epiphany.
Jan. 12—1st Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 19—Missionary Day.
Jan. 19-25—Church and Economic Life Week.
Jan. 26—3rd Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 26-Feb. 2—Youth Week.
Feb. 2—4th Sunday after Epiphany.
Feb. 9—Race Relations Sunday.
Feb. 16—The Transfiguration. Universal Day of Prayer for Students.
Feb. 16-23—Brotherhood Week.
Feb. 19—Ash Wednesday.
Feb. 21—World Day of Prayer.
Feb. 23—1st Sunday in Lent.

Book Reviews

WHEN I BECAME A MAN. *By Theodore P. Ferris. Oxford University. $3.75.*

THIS volume is addressed to "the average enlightened citizen" who has been brought up to believe in a personal God but in college and later life has been introduced through science to a world in which it is difficult to find such a God. It seeks to help such readers put away childish things, where necessary, and develop a mature and vital faith.

The twenty-five brief chapters are written in laymen's language, with an informal and conversational style, and filled with down-to-earth illustrations. Originally prepared as sermons and radio talks, they have more of the characteristics of the latter. There is nothing academic or stuffy about them. Sometimes one feels that the author elaborates the obvious, a few illustrations are not too successful, and there is some repetition. But on the whole the author "reaches" the audience he sets out to reach.

The first part discusses basic Christian beliefs, such as God and the world, Christ, the problem of evil, the resurrection, and the world to come. The second deals with more personal aspects of Christian living, such as discovering God as a personal experience, prayer, handling guilt, and facing death. This reviewer found himself in hearty accord with the general point of view of the author, though some would doubtless consider the treatment naively liberal.

This is a book that can be highly recommended to laymen who wish to find a solid basis for the faith that is in them. It is written by the rector of Trinity Church, Boston, who is author of a half dozen other volumes and a contributor to *The Interpreter's Bible.* —*Harold L. Lunger, Brite College of the Bible, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas.*

THE THUNDERING SCOT. *By Geddes MacGregor. Westminster Press. $3.95.*

GEDDES MacGregor, a Scot with pride in his homeland and its historic faith, has here written a biography of John Knox, the embattled reformer. It is a sympathetic yet sane appraisal of the man who, perhaps more than any, assured our Presbyterian heritage. The book bears the evident but not obtrusive stamp of scholarship. It is, as well, a rattli good story. MacGregor, a professor philosophy at Bryn Mawr Colle writes a lively prose uncommon in profession.

According to its subtitle, the book a "portrait." The author has paint the figure of Knox against a bac ground of the Scottish scone and wi a touch of wry Scotch humor. Wh MacGregor is too honest with sources to be carelessly inventive a has refused the psychoanalytic temp (a disease which among biographers now near epidemic), we could wish th he had ventured more boldly into cross-currents of Knox's character the conflict between invective enjoy and tenderness enjoined, between eloquent ego and his consecrated hea If there are omissions, they are jus fied: the book is a portrait, not a pho graph or an X-ray. Surely the auth has a "feel" for the fierce Scot w "neither flattered nor feared any flesh An intensely interesting book, Gedd MacGregor's biography of Knox e forces our faith in a God who will u complex and fallible human creatu in his service and even angry apost in the convening of his "kirk."—*Dav G. Buttrick, First Presbyterian, Fr donia, New York.*

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP. *By Wayne Oates. Westminster. $2.00.*

WAYNE Oates has done it agai With clarity, simplicity and co petence, he has written another book the field of pastoral care that should a useful guide for employing comm nity resources in dealing with person problems and making helpful referra Although it is written for a larger au ence and would serve as well in t hands of a troubled layman, it is a to book for the clergyman or counsel who wants to make community r sources an ally in his pastoral work.

The first part of the book interpre the resources and limits of the helpi professions, such as the ministry, me cine, law, teaching and social work. details the methods of seeking he from any of these sources.

The second part of the book discuss thirteen specific problems and the r sources available for meeting the pro lems. Under this category are problem relating to alcohol, health, mental il ness, marriage, and parenthood. Eac treatment is brief and aimed at maki resources available. Each chapter lis responsible and well established age cies that exist for the specific matt under consideration.

This useful book is important to a who carry on a concerned parish mi istry.—*Edgar N. Jackson, Mamar neck Methodist, Mamaroneck, Ne York.*

EVANGELISM FOR TOMORROW. *B Charles Templeton. Harper. $3.00*

AT a time when so much attention being paid to evangelism it is su prising that, as far as this reviewer able to judge, so few really discernin

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s have been written on the subject. ngelism is a central responsibility he church and of all individual stians, including ministers. Yet up w, the definitive book about evan- m as a crucial and technical task he 20th Century Church has not ared.

r. Templeton's book is not that . It is a good analysis of the ch's evangelistic task. Theologi- in the main stream of present day king, it makes the Incarnation the s, and mature Christians at work hurch and the social order the goal vangelistic effort. The description of ent evangelistic practices is en- tening, and it is a joy to have Dr. ham referred to as Dr. William klin rather than "Dr. Billy." Dr. pleton emphasizes the importance reaching with passion for a deci- . He puts his finger on one weak- of a lot of preaching when he gests that most of us who practice art do not put enough time into paration. We ought to get our lay- to do more church jobs so we d better communicate the Word of to contemporary men.

he book would be better written if ere not so cliché ridden. It is a good k, but not quite good enough for the ject. It lacks, for instance, a descrip- of the application of fresh new s in the field, such as we find in n Allan's "The Face of my Parish." s a good book to start with, but it is the book to help enough in telling affled practitioners of evangelism in 7 how to press forward. We are teful to Dr. Templeton for leading a ussion on the problem out of his at experience. The solution still its an answer that will be adequate the contemporary world.—*James don Gilkey, Jr., Bethany Union, cago, Illinois.*

LIGION AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. *By Hendrik Kraemer. Westminster. 6.00.*

ENDRIK Kraemer has never used his position in circles of ecumeni- responsibility as an excuse for diplo- tic or compromising avoidance of troversy. His newest book, which in- porates some materials which have peared in journals, has shown prom- of stirring as much discussion as did *The Christian Message in a Non- ristian World.* A chapter on "Syn- tism as a Problem for Religion" ich first appeared in a journal of ssions is the finest discussion of the ject that we have seen. Kraemer els with giants in the field of compar- ve religion (Rudolf Otto, Joachim ach, Ernst Troeltsch and others) in a hion that will command the atten- n of specialists. Of greater general erest to preachers is his Part Four, he Bible and the Problem of Religion d Religions" in which he hones con- ts of "Logos," "Wrath," "Righteous- ss," "Image of God" and others to zor-sharpness. He asserts here again, well as anyone of our generation is pable of doing, the particularity of the Christian revelation against the background of religions of human achievement.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FROM THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION. *By Harold Lindsell. Harper. $2.00 (cloth), $5.00 (leather).*

THIS minuscular volume should find a place in many a purse, pocket, or pulpit as a convenient manual of devotion "straight from the source." The dean of the faculty of Fuller Seminary has arranged sections of the RSV on 3¼" x 4⅞" pages and on thin paper. As a sample, Christmas day includes the angel's word to Mary and the announcement of the nativity from St. Luke's Gospel and the word of Isaiah 9:6-7. "Eternal life," "Do not be led away," "God the Teacher," these are typical topical heads. Unfortunately this "digest" of the RSV in both its bindings costs more than many complete versions in comparable bindings.

CHRIST AND ADAM. *By Karl Barth. Harper. $2.00.*

SOMETIMES a theological giant drops a footnote that sets lesser mortals to scurrying through the corpus of his earlier work to determine what brought it on. That has been happening since Karl Barth suggested a revisionist

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view of human nature in a comment on Romans 5 about five years ago. Now that it has appeared in translation it will meet a new public. We may hope that not only avowed "Barthians" will be attracted to it, for its question effects the heart of Christian preaching.

Barth argues that the relation between "Adam" and us is not the expression of our true and original nature; it only mirrors the primary anthropological truth and ordering principle outlined by St. Paul in his relating Christ to us. Adam is (Roman 5:14) the type of Him who was to come. "Man's essential and original nature is to be found, therefore, not in Adam but in Christ." Adam is to be interpreted in the light of Christ, and not *vice versa.*

Barth concludes that what is *Christian* is secretly but fundamentally identical with what is *universally human,* "a principle that has an incalculable significance for all our action and thought." In case the reader is not prepared for it, a foreword by Wilhelm Pauck helpfully forewarns him that this christological view of man implies a radical departure from all ordinary general doctrines of man, including the traditional theological "anthropologies" —and, might we ask, also Barth's own earlier position? As usual, the massive genius of the author is suggested in the way he takes up a chunk of Scripture and reads, marks, learns, and inwardly digests it.—*M.E.M.*

THE GOSPEL JESUS PREACHED. *By S. Maclean Gilmour. Westminster. $3.75.*

IT is the exciting task of the New Testament scholar to press back of the four Gospels to the gospel Jesus preached. There must be taken into account the didactic purpose of the Gospel writers, the hazards of translation from Aramaic to Greek, and the influence of the theology and practice of the early church upon the oral tradition during the forty years before it was formally written by Mark.

This has been brilliantly and reverently done by S. Maclean Gilmour, formerly professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis in Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. *The Gospel Jesus Preached* is a work of sound and extensive scholarship, written in language the layman can understand. The book has grown out of a series of broadcasts sponsored by the Radio Committee of the United Church of Canada and a course of lectures for laymen.

"The Good News About God" which Jesus preached, his teaching about prayer and legalism are clearly described. "The Ethical Imperatives of the Gospel" and "The Relevance of Jesus' Ethic" are handled. In his final chapter the author tells how the gospel Jesus preached became "The Good News About Jesus." Here is a book of value for ministers and laymen who desire the truth that makes men free.—*Harold L. Bowman, Pastor Emeritus, First Presbyterian, Chicago, Illinois.*

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THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. *By Robert H. Pfeiffer. Harper. $5.0*

Pfeiffer's *Introduction to the Old Testament* was greeted sixteen years ago as a landmark in the development of Old Testament criticism in America. Depending upon the point of view represented the zenith or the nadir of pure and extreme literary criticism of the Scriptures. The renewed preoccupation with the message and theology of the books of the Old Testament has deflected interest from this approach but not so much as to discourage Harper from publishing a shorter, more popular version of Pfeiffer's giant. In its present form it is more readable than the original though it is also less adequate as a reference work.

—M.E.M.

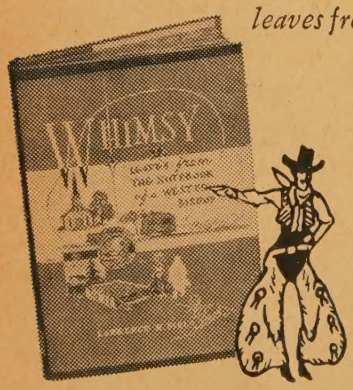
GETTING HELP FROM THE BIBLE. *By Charles M. Crowe. Harper. $2.95.*

These are "documented sermons" replete with stories from life and literature but rich in biblical reference and incident. Here is life-situation preaching at its best, each theme being treated in a distinctly topical manner.

The first and last of the chapters are superior sermons on the Bible itself. The choices of spiritual quotation and anecdote excellently reinforce the particular topic under consideration (fear, sickness, quietness, doubt, unhappiness, faith and prayer.) While Dr. Crowe's selections from different versions are brilliantly discriminating, the short, frequent jumps from one version to another, the omission at times of the name of the book and obscurity as to whether the figure means chapter or verses is confusing.

Investing some thought in this practical insight into the concerns of contemporary Christianity will be rewarding.—*James V. Claypool, Trinity Methodist, New Bedford, Mass.*

leaves from the notebook of a Western Bishop



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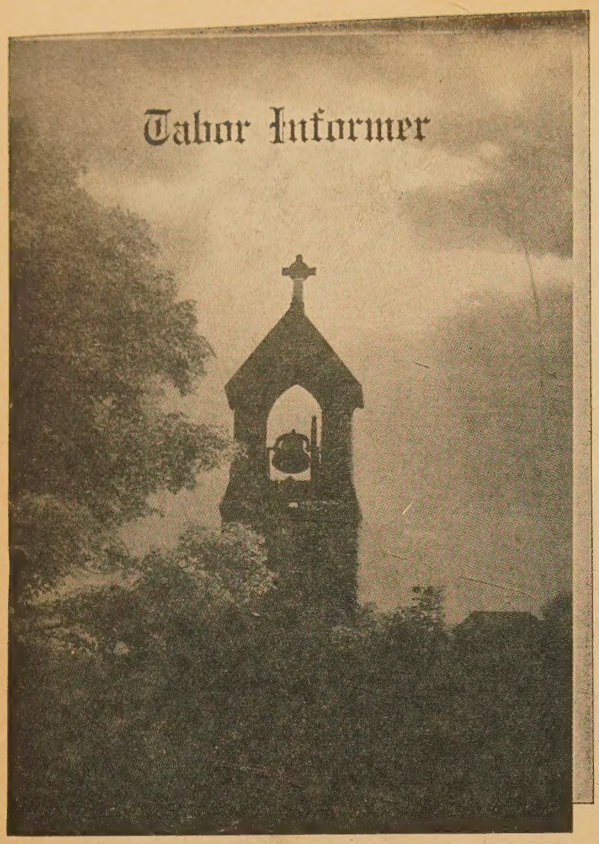

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